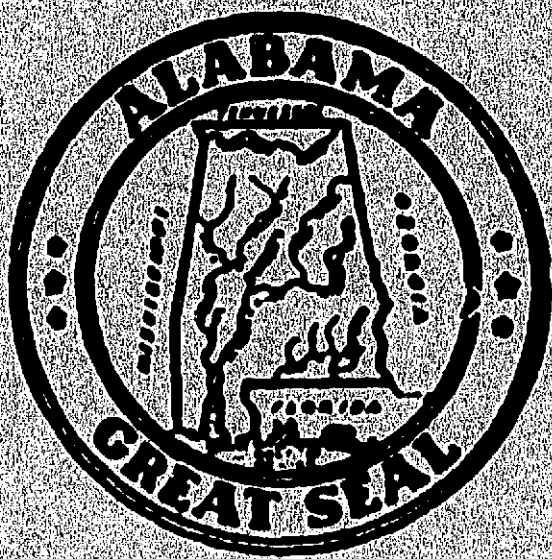


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CONTRIBUTORS

CAROL COTTON is with the Department of Speech, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

JACK D. L. HOLMES is professor of History, University of Alabama in Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama.

WILLIAM B. LAUDERDALE is an associate professor, Foundations of Education, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

JOE M. RICHARDSON is a professor of History, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

WILLIAM WARREN ROGERS is a professor of history, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

THE ROLE OF BLACKS IN SPANISH ALABAMA: THE MOBILE DISTRICT, 1780-1813

by

Jack D. L. Holmes*

As a research topic gradually unfolds, problems of terminology invariably arise. While trying to avoid the semantic pitfall of using such terms as "colored" or "Negro" to describe blacks in colonial Alabama, this researcher unwittingly antagonized the "fair sex." Presenting a paper on "The Status of Black Men in Spanish Alabama, two black *female* scholars immediately raised the question of my male chauvinism. The point is well taken. Blacks in colonial Alabama included both men and women. This term, "Blacks", is further broadened to include slave and free, mulatto and Negro.

As for the Mobile District, this political division of Spanish West Florida was created following the capture of Fort Charlotte by Spanish forces led by Bernardo de Galvez in 1780. The boundaries were vaguely defined, due in part to the conflicting claims of Indians, the United States, Spain, and even the state of Georgia. Everyone seemed to agree that the Gulf of Mexico was the southern boundary. The eastern boundary with Florida was set at the Perdido River, and the western line lay along the Pearl River. The northern boundary of the Mobile District fused with the conflicting claims of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks on the one hand; and with the Tennessee settlements of the Holston and Cumberland Rivers on the other. In addition to Mobile, Spain had settlements at Dauphin Island, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Bay St. Louis, and the off-shore islands.

For two decades prior to its acquisition by Spain in 1780 Mobile was included in the British Province of West Florida, that often-neglected "Fourteenth Original Colony" of America. For centuries the Gulf coast of the United States had been the scene of international rivalries. The end result was to give the area a polyglot, heterogeneous population composed of Canadians,

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Frenchmen, Spaniards, British subjects from England, Scotland and Ireland, Latin Americans, and a wide variety of blacks from Guadeloupe. In many ways the population resembled that of from Africa or the Islands of Santo Domingo, Martinique or neighboring Pensacola.¹

After the American Revolution Mobile was governed by a commandant subject to the orders of the governor-general of Louisiana and West Florida at New Orleans. Spain stretched her colonial laws and customs to fit conditions along coastal Alabama and Mississippi. The basis of colonial law was the *Recopilacion de leyes de los reinos de Indias*, which drew its ancient legal precepts from a vast body of Spanish laws, especially the *Siete Partidas* of the historian-lawyer-king Alfonso X (1252-1284).²

Governor Alexander O'Reilly established firm Spanish control of Louisiana in 1769 with the promulgation of various decrees and edicts taken from these ancient guidelines. But in many respects, he allowed operational laws and customs of the French to persist in Spanish Louisiana.³ One of these referred to blacks: the *Code Noir*. First promulgated in France in 1724, the "Black Code" was applied to Spanish Louisiana by O'Reilly on August 27, 1769.⁴

As the French had utilized black troops in their military reorganized the Negro and white militia units for the various campaigns, so O'Reilly continued the practice. In addition, he

¹Cf. the Census of 1820 for Pensacola, analyzed in Jack D. L. Holmes, "Pensacola: Spanish Dominion, 1781-1821," in *Colonial Pensacola*, edited by James R. McGovern (Pensacola, 1972), 97.

²*Recopilacion de leyes de los reinos de las Indias* (5th ed.; 4 vols.; Madrid, 1841). For scholarly analyses of Louisiana law, see Henry P. Dart, "Influence of the Ancient Laws of Spain on the Jurisprudence of Louisiana," *Journal of the American Bar Association*, XVIII (1932), 125-129; and C. Russell Reynolds, "Alfonso el Sabio's Laws Survive in the Civil Code of Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, XII (Spring, 1971), 137-147.

³Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some Irish Officers in Spanish Louisiana," *The Irish Sword*, VI (Winter, 1964), 234-240.

⁴A copy is in the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), MS Tomo 19,246 folio 100. An edition of the *Code Noir* was also published in New Orleans by Antoine Boudousquie in 1778, from the decree issued May 14, 1777. Parsons Collection, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas. A summary in English appears in Alcée Fortier, *A History of Louisiana* (4 vols.; New Orleans and Paris, 1904), I, 87-94.

districts and New Orleans.⁵ The subsequent modification of laws and regulations in Louisiana and West Florida was dictated by the process of trial and error. Thus, following the abortive slave revolt at Pointe Coupee, Louisiana in 1795, the governor-general, Francisco Luis Hector, Baron de Carondelet, issued a new, more stringent slave code in an effort to keep slaves under control. He also decreed the closing of the slave trade, a step which his successors suspended because of the demand for additional Negro slaves to work the fields in Louisiana and West Florida.⁶

After Mobile became Spanish, the commandants and lesser officials were ordered to compile careful census reports for their respective districts, to include the heads of families, marital status, number of children and slaves they had, and their ownership of plantations and production of livestock and crops. From these census records we may derive demographic details on the distribution of blacks in the Mobile District. John Linder, Sr., a Swiss by birth, who had immigrated to the lush valleys of the Tensaw and Tombigbee Rivers during the American Revolution, was named justice of the peace for the District of Tensaw and Tombigbee.⁷ In his "Liste des Habitans" for the Tensaw, which he compiled on July 27, 1785, he shows for the whites, 46 men, 23 women, and 54 children. There were 64 male Negro slaves, 49 female Negro slaves, and 46 Negro children.⁸

In the first general *padron*, or census for the Mobile District, compiled by Pedro de Favrot, the commandant at Mobile in 1786, he lists eight categories of people by name, with the exception of the Negro slaves.⁹ A year later, he compiled an-

⁵Holmes, "Some Irish Officers," 237. O'Reilly appointed Pedro Simon, a free Mulatto, to head the militia of his race February 24, 1770. On the use of blacks and mulattoes by the French in Louisiana, see Roland C. McConnell, *Negro Troops of Antebellum Louisiana, a History of the Battalion of Free Men of Color* (Baton Rouge, 1968), 3-14.

⁶Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795," *Louisiana History*, XI (Fall, 1970), 354-357.

⁷Information on Linder is contained in Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Tensaw Settlement in Colonial Times," Unpublished paper read to the Alabama Academy of Science, April 6, 1968, to be incorporated in the author's forthcoming "Alabama Settlers, 1780-1813."

⁸The document is from the Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla, Spain), Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba, legajo 198 (hereafter cited as AGI, PC).

other *padron*, which is less complete, but shows a very gradual growth in white population, but a significant increase in the number of Negro slaves.¹⁰ Fevrot was succeeded by the brilliant administrator and military leader, Vicente Folch y Juan, who in turn compiled a *padron* of the Mobile District for 1788.¹¹ This census also shows a small increase in all categories.¹² The next general census report for the Mobile District encountered by this writer was that prepared by Commandant Francisco Maximiliano de St. Maxent on September 12, 1805.¹³ It shows a large decrease in all categories, probably due to the loss of the heavily-populated Tensaw and Tombigbee valleys to the United States between 1797 and 1799. A chart identifies the numbers of each category:

FIGURE 1
POPULATION OF THE MOBILE DISTRICT
1785-1805

Category	1785	1786	1788	1805
White men	114	112	144	226
White women	78	84	96	154
White children	254	245	318	293
Free mulattoes	47	49	69*	205
Free Negroes	14	15	*	45
Mulatto slaves	70	86	?	69
Male Negro slaves	321	639#	767&	307
Negress slaves	251	#	&	236

* Figures not separated by Mulatto-Negro, but by sex: 27 free colored men, 38 free colored women, and four free colored children.

The Negro slaves are not separated by sex. The total is 639.

& Negro slaves are not separated by sex. The total is 767.

⁹Pedro de Favrot, *Padron of the Mobile District for 1785*, Mobile, January 1, 1786, AGI, PC, leg. 2360.

¹⁰Pedro de Favrot, *Padron of the Mobile District for 1786*, Mobile, January 1, 1787, AGI, PC, leg. 2361.

¹¹Vicente Folch y Juan, *Padron of the Mobile District for 1788*, Mobile, March 15, 1789, AGI, PC, leg. 202. On Folch, see Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish Military Commanders in Colonial Alabama," *Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science*, XXXVII (January, 1966), 56-57.

¹²Slightly different figures on the 1788 census appear in the general census compiled by Esteban Miro in 1788, AGI, PC, leg. 1425-A. By Miro's record, there were 777 men and 676 women for a total population in the district of 1,453. There were 257 male whites and 185 female whites (broken into three age groups). Free mulattoes and Negroes amounted to 49 men and 39 women, while Negro slaves included 471 men and 452 women.

¹³Francisco Maximiliano de St. Maxent, *General Census for the Mobile District*, Mobile, September 12, 1805, AGI, PC, leg. 142-A.

Lieutenant-colonel Juan de la Villebeuvre, as commandant of the fort and district of San Esteban de Tombecbe (St. Stephens) in 1797, listed the settlers there in a valuable *padron* or census report. A total of seventy-eight white settlers reported owning fifty-two male and forty-five female Negro slaves as of April 16, 1797.¹⁴

Information concerning the introduction of Negro slaves into colonial Alabama is also available by checking the lists of new immigrants. Thus, in 1791 when a large number of prominent settlers agreed to sign a loyalty oath to Spain, the commandant included data on the size of their families and the number of slaves. Such notable early families in Alabama as the Boykin, Bassett, Burnett, and Sizemore heads of family signed the oath.¹⁵ One list indicates that the whites were thirty-four men, thirteen women, and forty-three children. They brought with them sixteen male Negro slaves, seven Negress slaves, and nineteen Negro slave children.¹⁶

Religious reports add to extant knowledge of the spread of black colonials. When Bishop Cirilo de Barcelona made his pastoral visit to Mobile and Pensacola in 1791, he listed the settlers and their slaves. For Pensacola, he was more detailed, showing that of the 572 settlers there, 292 were white Catholics; 119, black Catholics; 47, white Protestants; and 114 black Protestants. Of the 733 "souls" in the Mobile District, he reported 258 were white of all ages and sexes. The remaining 475 settlers were blacks (including free and slave, all black and mulatto). The Tombigbee and Tensaw settlements were given separately, but with no racial breakdown.¹⁷

As a result of the abortive slave revolt at Pointe Coupee in 1795, new records were filed. Planters in that Louisiana settle-

¹⁴Juan de la Villebeuvre, Census of the District of San Esteban de Tombecbé, Fort San Esteban de Tombecbé, April 16, 1797, AGI, PC, leg. 64. See Jack D. L. Holmes (comp.), "1797 Alabama Census According to Spanish Records," *Alabama Genealogical Register*, VIII (September, 1966), 123-124.

¹⁵The list is in AGI, PC, leg. 122-B. Other lists are in *ibid.*, leg. 52.

¹⁶Unsigned list of newly-arrived families to the Tensaw District, Mobile, May 2, 1791, AGI, PC, leg. 122-B.

¹⁷Expediente concerning the pastoral report of Bishop Cirilo de Barcelona to Antonio Porlier (Minister of State), New Orleans, May 18 and 28, 1791, AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2531. A copy is in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

ment lost more than a score of slaves as a result of execution, exile or imprisonment. Hoping to alleviate their loss, Governor-general Carondelet urged the planters of Louisiana and West Florida to volunteer a fixed fee for each slave they owned. This money would be placed in a fund and allotted to the planters on a proportional basis for their losses.¹⁸ Mobile's report, drawn up on December 31, 1795, showed that a total of twenty-nine planters owned a total of 192 slaves. The list also included planters at Dauphin Island, Pascagoula, Bay St. Louis, and Fish and Dog Rivers. The general total of *all* planters was forty-nine, and they owned 284 slaves. The merchant, John Joyce had 28; the Widow Rochon, 32. Most planters owned just a few slaves. Of the twenty-nine Mobile planters, only nineteen agreed to contribute to the fund. Even the wealthy Widow Rochon with the most slaves declined to contribute. In the rest of the district twenty planters owning ninety-two slaves apparently agreed with the widow—thanks to them the plan was *not* working! Since the fees were to be voluntary, the government did not press the matter, but the names of those who refused were published.¹⁹

Statistics are a useful tool upon which to build various factual statements regarding slavery in colonial Alabama, but they are, in the final analysis, less than inspired. Closer examination of the colonial records during the Spanish dominion of Alabama does reveal something of the contemporary mores involving such subjects as the rights of free and slave blacks, participation in military units, open-housing, mobility, civil rights, religion and miscegenation.

Mobile church records show an unusually high incidence of intermarriage among the black, white, and mulatto settlers of Mobile. A good illustration of this centers around the prominent Chastang family whose members lived north of Mobile along the Tensaw and Tombigbee Rivers. Dr. John Chastang, a prominent surgeon who served as the earliest medical consultant at Fort San Esteban de Tombecbe, lived in his mansion near the fort called Harigay Hall. His concubine, Luisa, was a free Negress, native of Mobile. Dr. Chastang and Luisa were the

¹⁸Concerning the Pointe Coupée revolt, see Holmes, "The Abortive Revolt," cited *supra*, note 6. See also, "Lista de los habitantes . . . que tienen esclavos" (List of settlers owning slaves), Mobile, December 31, 1795, AGI, PC, leg. 212-B.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

parents of a number of natural and illegitimate children, all of whom were recognized by the father. Basilio (or Basile) Chastang, one of the natural sons, was married to Desiree Laurent, also a product of a mixed liaison between Bartolomeo Laurent and the free mulattress, Luisa. Basilio was a registered cattleman at St. Stephens and a corporal in the mulatto militia of Mobile. His brother, Zenon, likewise a mulatto, was married to Maria Teresa Bernoudy, a mulatto and natural daughter of Regis Bernoudy and of Isabel, a free negress. He was also an early "black cowboy" in the Mobile District. The family was a large, cattle raising, close-knit group who apparently enjoyed social distinction, if not because of their interracial marriages, at least in spite of them.²⁰

Numerous prominent families of the Mobile District were intermarried with free blacks and mulattoes. This was not as unusual as it might seem, for intermarriage and concubinage were facts of life in colonial Louisiana and West Florida. As Bishop Luis Penalver y Cardenas wrote in 1799, repeating his irate complaints of 1795, "They," referring to the military officers, "live openly with their mulatto concubines as do many of the people, and they are not ashamed to name the children in the parish registers as their natural children."²¹ Indeed, as the historian John F. Watson pointed out after a visit to New Orleans in 1804-1805, "... Visit the churches when you will, and the chief of the audience is formed of mulattresses and negresses—the chief devotees seem to be the concubines; in truth, they are a good race of women; they are faithful ones who never desert their *maris* (or supporters) in any case of

²⁰Data on the Chastang family, sometimes appearing in the records as "Sartan," was collected from numerous sources including marriage, death and birth records of the Parish of Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion (Mobile), Chancellor's Office, Mobile; livestock brands for the San Esteban District, compiled in 1795 by Commandant Lieutenant Antonio Palao for ten different members of that family, AGI, PC, leg. 222-B; militia records, Mobile, 1800, AGI, PC, leg. 71-B. Other families showing mixing include Garcia, Pendargrast (Pendergast?), Andry, Lalanda, and Colem.

²¹Joseph Antonio Caballero to Antonio Coruel (Cornel?), San Lorenzo, November 13, 1799, in James Alexander Robertson (ed.), *Louisiana under the Rule of Spain, France, and the United States, 1785-1807* (2 vols.; Cleveland, 1911), I, 356. A similar complaint appears in Bishop Luis's report dated New Orleans, November 1, 1795, Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), Ms Vol. 19,509, folios 24-27, for which there is a summary in Jack D. L. Holmes, "Dramatis Personae in Spanish Louisiana," *Louisiana Studies*, VI (Summer, 1967), 150-151.

adversity. They do not marry, because custom holds that to be odious; but *that* not being their fault, they are, in all respects, good as wives in general, frugal in their habits and innocent in their lives and deportment . . . They are not unlike the worthy concubines of old . . . Their whole deportment in them [the quadroon balls] is chaste and civil . . ."²²

Under the law, free blacks and mulattoes enjoyed equal rights with their white neighbors, although discrimination, personal slights, prejudice, and other marks of poor breeding were omnipresent in the past, as today. One example may give some idea of how far the Spanish government would go to protect the rights of its colored vassals. A free mulattress in Mobile, Catherine Durand, complained in 1795 that three soldiers from the Louisiana Infantry Regiment's Third Battalion had stolen two handkerchiefs from her. Tried by a court martial in Pensacola, the soldiers were found not guilty. In reviewing the case, however, Governor-general Carondelet in his capacity as Inspector-General of all the armies in Louisiana and West Florida, refused to accept the decision of the court martial. The entire matter was sent to the Supreme Council of War in Spain with Carondelet's objections to the way the case had been handled to "white wash" the guilty parties. Perhaps two handkerchiefs is a tempest in a teapot, but the principle of legal and juridical equality of free blacks and mulattoes emerges loud and clear.²³

Spanish Alabama offers a marked contrast to race relations in early American Alabama. Slaves, for example, if they lived in the days of the Spanish Dons, were amply protected from physical abuse at the hands of their masters. Should a master treat a black slave with cruelty, he could petition the government to be transferred to another owner. Bristol, a black slave, who had suffered a cut hand and gangrene, was treated at Mobile's Royal Hospital in 1793. Since his former master, Josef Domingo, had died, Thomas Comis lay claim to the black man. Rather than accompany his "new" master, Bris-

²²John F. Watson, "Notitia of Incidents at New Orleans in 1804 and 1805," *American Pioneer*, II (May, 1843), 234, 236.

²³The suit is cited in Carondelet to Luis de las Casas, New Orleans, April 30, 1795, AGI, PC, leg. 1443-B.

tol fled, and the commandant of Tensaw, Juan Queler, approved the action.²⁴

Negro slaves were often called upon to testify in cases involving white men. When Cornelius Rain, Jr. complained to John Linder that one John Ballard had stolen two of his Negroes, Ballard was jailed in Pensacola, and the commandant, Colonel Arturo O'Neill, interrogated the Negroes concerned. "My home was Guinea," testified Dick, "but I don't know what religion I am." He explained that he had run away from his master in Charleston and joined Ballard of his own free will. Jack, the other black man, was also a runaway. The case was finally settled when Ballard paid Rain the sum of \$180, and the blacks eagerly returned to Ballard who had shown them compassion and friendship.²⁵

Cruelty to slaves or the degradation felt by the unnatural condition of slavery, often forced the blacks to escape. They were then called "cimarrones" or "cimarrons" and there was a price placed on their head. If they were captured, however, they could testify in their own behalf before the civil or military commandant of the district. A generation or two later, the United States would split over the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Laws which excluded just such testimony.²⁶

It must not be considered that because slavery was more benign in Spanish Louisiana, Alabama, or Natchez, that it was a fine situation. As in the United States, retribution against slaves who dared to assault their masters was swift and cruel, and in most cases an "example" was made to other slaves. When two blacks in Louisiana whipped their master and set his hayloft on fire, they were tried and convicted. On June 20, 1771, they were dragged behind horses before being hanged. Then they were drawn and quartered. Governor Luis de Unzaga explained the cruel punishment: "The realization that these negroes have impressed upon me, and other things of less importance which are happening everyday among the negroes, has given me to understand that quick, active and very severe action

²⁴Juan Queler (Keller?) to Manuel de Lanzos, Tinza (Tensaw), September 23, 1793, AGI, PC, leg. 123.

²⁵The case is contained in a large dossier (*expediente*) in AGI, PC, leg. 169.

²⁶See the case of the runaways, Luis and Enrique, who were tried at Mobile before the commandant, Vicente Folch, March 9, 1789, AGI, PC, leg. 172-A.

must be taken against them, and they must be treated with all the severity of our laws, recalling, at the same time, that our laws are not so harsh as those in force among the French here . . . ”²⁷

Spanish judicial officers did not hesitate to torture blacks who were accused of crimes in an effort to make them confess. Thus, in 1778 when Clement and Jacobo, two black slaves, were accused of murder and robbery, both were tortured. Clement confessed, was executed in the Plaza de Armas, and his body placed in a sack and dumped in the Mississippi. Jacobo, tortured by fire, refused to confess, and was found guilty only of theft. He was given 200 lashes at the foot of the New Orleans gallows.²⁸

In general, the slave regulations were the same for Alabama as for Louisiana. Liquor was not to be sold to blacks, nor given to them. In order to prevent theft, no one was permitted to buy goods from blacks unless the slaves had written permission from their masters. Firearms, unless by special permit, were forbidden to slaves. Slaves who wandered more than three miles from their plantation without written permission from their masters, were considered as runaways. Whites apprehending such “cimarrones” and returning them to their masters were entitled to be paid \$2.00 for stopping the black and four bits for every league he passed in returning him. Settlers who violated the regulations could be fined and jailed.²⁹

It is a safe assumption that it was a rare black man or woman who felt that slavery was the best of all possible worlds. Yet, the status of the free blacks and mulattoes was infinitely

²⁷Unzaga to Antonio Maria Bucarely y Ursua, No. 157, New Orleans, June 22, 1771. A slightly different translation appears in W. P. A., *Dispatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana* (5 books of 5 vols. each; New Orleans, 1937-1938), Book I, Vol. III, p. 43.

²⁸Laura L. Porteous (ed. and trans.), “Index to Spanish Judicial Records of Louisiana,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XII, No. 4 (October, 1929), 682.

²⁹This regulation is drawn from that of Antonio Palao for the District of San Esteban, April 24, 1795, AGI, PC, leg. 213. For additional laws concerning blacks and liquor, see Jack D. L. Holmes, “Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade in the Mississippi Valley,” in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*, edited by John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 159.

better in Spanish Mobile than it was for either slaves, or for their counterparts in the United States, as a general rule.

Black and mulatto labor played an important part in the economic progress of Alabama. A number of free blacks worked as sailors on small craft carrying supplies between Dauphin Island and Mobile.³⁰ Alexo, a free mulatto, was a male nurse at Mobile's Royal Hospital.³¹ Andres, a free Negro, took charge in the care and cleaning of smaller boats in the Mobile coast guard.³² The Chastang family owned hundreds of head of cattle along the rich pastures of the Tombigbee.³³

Carlos Lalanda, a prominent mulatto in Mobile, not only commanded the mulatto militia, but in 1811 he was awarded a contract to supply the biscuit and hardtack for the Mobile garrison. This is the same mulatto who bought Belle Fontaine on Mobile Bay in 1796, which added to his land holdings along Dog River, Grand Terre and Tensaw.³⁴ A free Negress, Louison, appears in the census of 1786. As the baking contractor for Fort San Esteban in 1791, she earned \$10 a month, but two years later she asked for an increase in pay due to the increased garrison and double duties. She received \$15.³⁵ Nicholas Mongulas was a free Negro who earned a post with the government as a master mason.³⁶ When they were needed for labor digging trenches and piling sand-bags on the Mobile levees, blacks were paid at the rate of \$1.00 a fathom, while other workers generally earned \$8 a month—a respectable sum compared to army pay.³⁷

³⁰These included Valentin Alexandro, Ambrosio Asmar and Santiago Lacosta. Their official pay records (*asientos*) are in AGI, PC, leg. 538-A.

³¹*Ibid.* Another male nurse was Pedro Moreno. *Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.* Another in the same line was José Gustavo. *Ibid.*

³³Among the cattle brands registered at San Esteban during 1795 six were to different Chastangs and 4 to different Sartans. Many of these individuals were black or mulatto. AGI, PC, leg. 222-B.

³⁴Contract of Lalanda, AGI, PC, leg. 391; Translated Land Records, Mobile Probate Court, I, 183-184, 190-191, 198-199, 210-211.

³⁵Census of 1786, AGI, PC, leg. 2360. Her contracts and petitions are in a large *expediente* with pay records, AGI, PC, leg. 538-A.

³⁶Pay record (*asiento*), AGI, PC, leg. 538-A. He is also listed in the 1786 census and was a landowner in Mobile: Translated Land Records, Mobile Probate Court, I, 110-111.

³⁷Manuel de Lanzos to Carondelet, Mobile, July 24, 1792, copy enclosed in Carondelet to Luis de las Casas, No. 179, New Orleans, August 28, 1792, AGI, PC, leg. 1441.

Records of Mobile's Parish of the Immaculate Conception were integrated, in contrast to official registers of births, deaths and marriages in other parishes, such as St. Louis in New Orleans. In 1791, when Bishop Cirilo de Barcelona provided the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Mobile District, he confirmed 243 people, of whom 167 were black. On Dauphin Island in May he confirmed an additional seven free and slave blacks and mulattoes.³⁸ Likewise, in 1798, when Bishop Luis Penalver y Cardenas administered Confirmation in the Mobile District, 342 people received the Sacrament. A large number were black. These confirmation records are integrated with those of whites.³⁹ A profile of racial relations in Mobile can be traced from a careful examination of these various church records.

Blacks also rendered important military service in the Mobile area. Contemporary blacks in the Southern United States were generally excluded from the militia, but from 1780, when Spain captured Mobile from the British, blacks had demonstrated military skill, hard work and bravery. The British commander at Fort Charlotte, Elias Durnford, deprecated the black troops among his adversaries, claiming such forces could never force the British to surrender. How wrong he was!⁴⁰

The first man wounded on March 8, 1780, was a free Negro. Other black heroes were Agustin Renaud (Renato), Pedro Bahy, Jean Me(n)des, and Cupidon Caresce, all of whom fought in the Mobile campaign. They were blacks or mulattoes. Lorenzo Montero, adjutant of the Battalion of Free Black Militia of Havana, was attached to the Royal Artillery Corps at Mobile, where he commanded a cannon in the battery at the time of the Spanish siege. Numerous blacks were granted special silver medals and pensions for their bravery under fire. It is not beyond belief that some black today can claim membership in the Sons or Daughters of the American Revolution, based on

³⁸Confirmations, April 30-May 6, 1791, original records in the Parish of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile Chancellor's Office.

³⁹These records are in the archives of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans. See New Orleans Genealogical Research Society (comp.), *Libro primero de confirmaciones de esta parroquia de S. Luis de la Nueva Orleans* (New Orleans, 1967), 74-79.

⁴⁰Durnford's opinion is mentioned in Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (Boston, 1879), 254.

the valorous service of one of their ancestors at Mobile or Pensacola.⁴¹

Following the war black militia units were utilized in the Mobile District to track down runaway slaves and to fight against camps of cimarrons. The Baron of Carondelet wrote in 1792, "The colored people have served during the late war with great valor and usefulness, and in time of peace they are the ones used to pursue the runaway Negro slaves and destroy their camps, which they have established in spots virtually impenetrable to the regular troops."⁴²

Militia units in Mobile were kept segregated, much as the Negro and mulatto militia were organized in Cuba and Mexico following the Seven Years' War.⁴³ In the muster for 1802, Commandant Joaquin de Osorno reported that Captain Carlos Lalanda commanded the black unit with support from Lieutenant Registe Durelle. The command had a first sergeant and twenty-one Negro and Mulatto militiamen who received the same benefits as their white counterparts.⁴⁴ Nor were blacks confined to land service. Manuel de Zuniga, a free mulatto who was born in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), fought on the French corsair *El Hennie*, which preyed on belligerent commerce in the Gulf during the naval war of 1798. He earned a full share of the loot.⁴⁵

A look at the land records in the Mobile Probate Court indicates there was no such thing as an artificially-segregated ghetto for blacks in Spanish Mobile, a characteristic also shared by other Spanish settlements along the Gulf. Hard-core discrimination on the basis of race and color were as lacking in Spanish Mobile as they were present in American Mobile, as in-

⁴¹Activities of these military units are in Jack D. L. Holmes, "Negro Military Organizations in Spanish Louisiana," unpublished paper, read at the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, New York City, October 4, 1968.

⁴²Carondelet to Luis de las Casas, No. 100, New Orleans, May 16, 1792, Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Guerra Moderna, leg. 6925.

⁴³Jack D. L. Holmes, *Honor and Fidelity, the Louisiana Infantry Regiment and the Louisiana Militia Companies, 1766-1821* (Birmingham, Alabama, 1965), 54-59.

⁴⁴Manuel de Lanzos, Muster lists of Mobile militia, enclosed in Lanzos to Marques de Casa-Calvo, No. 113, Mobile, July 1, 1800, AGI, PC, leg. 71-B.

⁴⁵Last will and testament of Zuniga, New Orleans, September 19, 1798, Notarial Archives, New Orleans Court House, Vol. XXXII, fols. 725-727.

licated in studies of recent vintage.⁴⁶ If the study of the Spanish Dominion in the Mobile District does nothing else, it indicates alternative life styles regarding racial relations, which may be worthy of emulation in the contemporary era.

⁴⁶Julia F. Smith, "Racial Attitudes in the Old Southwest," in *The Americanization of the Gulf Coast, 1803-1850*, edited by Lucius F. Ellsworth (Pensacola, 1972), 68-77.

"TO HELP A BROTHER ON:" THE FIRST DECADE OF TALLADEGA COLLEGE

by

Joe M. Richardson

As a result of the Civil War approximately 439,000 Alabama slaves were removed from a condition of dependence and thrown upon their own resources to survive in an increasingly complicated society. These former slaves were poorly prepared for their new status. Slavery had permitted little exposure to formal learning and the newly liberated freedmen's responsibility for their own welfare necessitated education. Fortunately, most black Alabamians were eager for knowledge.

A chaplain of the Tenth Iowa Veterans Brigade wrote from Decatur in May, 1864, that he had "never seen any people more ready or eager to learn . . ." One teacher at Stevenson found blacks "very eager to be educated, including old people who worked all day." "Too much cannot be said of the desire to learn among this people" wrote Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau Wager Swayne. "Everywhere, to open a school is to have it filled." A white Alabamian claimed that everyone in his neighborhood was "going crazy. The Negroes old and young, little and big, have all gone crazy about schools."¹

Numerous Northern benevolent societies responded to the former slaves' desire for education. Of the many educational associations spawned by emancipation, the American Missionary Association was the most important in Alabama. Although the American Missionary Association was not created primarily for freedmen's aid, it answered the call of destitute blacks on the outbreak of the Civil War. Organized September 3, 1846, as a protest against the relative silence of other missionary societies concerning slavery, the Association carried on nondenomina-

¹W. G. Kephart to L. Tappan, May 9, 1864, American Missionary Association Archives, Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana. Cited hereafter as AMAA; *Pennsylvania Freedmen's Bulletin*, I (August 1, 1865), 46; *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 6, p. 13; Edwin Beecher, Alabama School Report, July 13, 1869, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Educational Division, National Archives, cited hereafter as Bureau Records, Ed. Div.

tional work, attempting to convince Southerners of the evils of the peculiar institution. When the first slaves were freed, the A. M. A. led the way in systematic relief and education. It sent missionaries to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, as early as September, 1861. The number increased until, by 1866, the association employed more than 350 persons in southern schools and churches.²

When Alabama whites bitterly accused A. M. A. agents of teaching equality, they were sometimes correct. The association advocated full citizenship for freedmen. In 1865 Lewis Tappan, the Association's guiding spirit until his death in 1873, wrote that black men would never have their rights until they had "a musket in one hand and a ballot in the other." At its annual meeting in 1865 the A. M. A. approved black suffrage and full citizenship. Emancipation and liberty, a resolution read, are but "mocking words if they do not convey the rights of citizenship, and we protest against excluding men from the rights of citizenship, civil or political on account of their color." Though it sometimes failed, the A. M. A. was determined to select no teachers who yielded to prejudice. As Lewis Tappan said: "We give small *salaries* choosing that the teachers realize their largest compensation in the pleasure of doing good."³

Northern teachers were slow in coming to Alabama. The delayed occupation by Federal forces discouraged Northern agents until late Spring, 1865. By that time teachers were already committed to other states. There were small schools in Mobile, Huntsville, and Montgomery in 1865 but most counties had no schools for black children until the fall of 1866.⁴ En-

²For detailed studies of the American Missionary Association see: Clifton H. Johnson, "The American Missionary Association, 1846-1861: A Study of Christian Abolition," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1959), and Richard B. Drake, "The American Missionary Association and the Southern Negro, 1861-1888," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Emory University, 1957).

³Lewis Tappan to Charles Sumner, February 13, 1865, and to D. Baldwin, June 3, 1865, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; *American Missionary*, IX (December, 1865), 268, 273.

⁴C. W. Buckley, Alabama School Report, October 24, 1866, Bureau Records; J. Silsby to G. Whipple, November 2, 1865, AMAA; M. Woodhull to J. R. Shipherd, February 1, 1866, W. Swayne to O. O. Howard, September 12, 1866, Bureau Records, A. A. G. Office; Horace Mann Bond, *Social and Economic Influences on the Public Education of Negroes in Alabama 1865-1930* (Washington, D. C., 1939), 84.

couraged by a Freedman's Bureau offer to help pay salaries,⁵ the A. M. A. sent more than forty teachers to Alabama in 1866. As a result, educational work in Alabama was virtually monopolized by the Association.⁶

These missionary teachers, though sought out by black youth, were not always welcomed by white Alabamians. General O. O. Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, had warned teachers who went South that they must "dare to be hated, outraged, murdered. The villainies of men who will rob and murder the poor, who will burn school houses, must be expected."⁷ Few teachers were violently handled but many were subjected to sneers, verbal assault, and social ostracism. Numerous whites were opposed to black education and even those who advocated instructing former slaves had reservations about Northern teachers. An Alabama clergyman said there was no question that blacks would be taught. The only question was who would teach them. He feared that Northerners who came to Alabama would be a "low" class whose "moral and intellectual culture" offered them few rewards at home. They would bring ideas of black suffrage, "social equality, of miscegenation . . . and every mischievous outgrowth of the fanaticism of that clime. . . ." If Alabamians did not want "the distinction of races to be destroyed and permit equality in every respect," Northern teachers must be kept out of the state. Other Alabamians spoke of "slab-sided old maids" who taught blacks to lie and steal, enemies who "come to spy out, to censure, to subdue" and aliens who advocated racial inter-marriage and hatred of Southern whites.⁸ White opposition to black education took the form of ostracizing teachers, refusing to rent buildings for

⁵The Bureau by no means paid salaries of all A. M. A. teachers in Alabama. Bureau Superintendent of Education C. W. Buckley said that he paid salaries of at least sixteen A. M. A. teachers in Alabama in 1867 with the assumption that the Association would continue them and pay their salaries for the following year. C. W. Buckley to E. P. Smith, August 15, 1867, AMAA.

⁶*American Missionary*, XI (April, 1867), 75-78; Bond, *Social and Economic Influences*, 82.

⁷*Talladega Alabama Reporter*, May 24, 1866.

⁸*Tuscaloosa Observer*, July 21, 1866; *Talladega Alabama Reporter*, July 12, 1866; *House Reports*, 39th Cong., 1st Sess., No. 30, pt. III, 30; C. W. Buckley, *Alabama School Report*, October 24, 1866, Bureau Records; L. M. Peck to E. P. Smith, June 21, 1867, AMAA; Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York, 1905), 466.

schools, and refusing to board teachers.⁹ As a result, most of the early black schools were in, or near, major towns. The countryside was considered "wholly unsafe."¹⁰

Among the schools the A. M. A. established in Alabama was one at Talladega, the only black school in a ten-county area. The teachers were concerned at the lack of educational opportunity, but apparently it was Assistant Commissioner Swayne who provided the leadership in establishing Talladega College. As early as February, 1867, Swayne had said that "in point of health and cheapness of living as well as other important considerations" Talladega was the most suitable place for a black college. Swayne proposed to buy the Baptist College building with the Bureau and the Association sharing the cost.¹¹ The Bureau eventually spent approximately \$20,000 on property and repairs. The only building was named Swayne Hall in honor of the Assistant Commissioner.¹² The Association described the purchase as "a fine college . . . consisting of thirty-four acres, and a handsome brick building which had been erected before the war at a cost of thirty-four thousand dollars." Talladega faculty would later proudly claim that the slave carpenter "who sawed the first plank and chipped the first shaving" for Swayne Hall lived to see three of his children receive diplomas at the college.¹³

Classes opened on the new campus in November, 1867, with

⁹Other whites advocated more vigorous action. In late 1865 and early 1866 three black churches and two black schoolhouses were burned. Several teachers were threatened. C. W. Buckley, Alabama School Report, October 24, 1866, Bureau Records, Ed. Div.; W. Fiske to G. Whipple, March 14, 1866, AMAA.

¹⁰W. Swayne to O. O. Howard, September 12, 1866, Bureau Records, A. A. G. Office; Mobile *Nationalist*, January 11, 1866.

¹¹Swayne asked Commissioner Howard for \$6,000 to buy the property. Howard replied that he had no authority to make such purchases, but if the A. M. A. would buy the property, Swayne could use \$6,000 in rental, repairs and construction to aid them. Eventually Swayne spent considerably more than \$6,000 on Talladega College. O. O. Howard to W. Swayne, June 24, 1867, Bureau Records, A. A. G. Office.

¹²U. S. Commissioner of Education, *Report for the Year 1872* (Washington, D. C., 1873), 7; W. Swayne to O. O. Howard, May 7, June 18, 1867, Bureau Records, A. A. G. Office; J. Silsby to E. M. Cravath, February 26, 1867, E. Anderson to M. E. Strieby, April 15, 1867, C. W. Buckley to E. M. Cravath, July 26, 1867, AMAA.

¹³Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the American Missionary Association* (Boston, 1909), 173, 176.

140 students and four teachers. The instructors were the Reverend H. E. Brown, W. P. M. Gilbert, Mrs. M. V. Hobson and Mrs. Phebe Bebee. All students were receiving elementary training, but the association planned to develop a normal school. Talladega soon became "the" school for surrounding counties. In his travels the Reverend Mr. Brown was constantly asked for teachers whom he could not provide. He began to urge churches to select their best potential teacher, send all the corn and bacon they could collect for the student's support and Brown would train them a teacher. Young men and women chosen by their churches walked up to thirty miles to Talladega with sacks of corn and bacon on their backs. Since Talladega had no dormitories students were forced to live in any accommodations they could find.¹⁴ Bureau superintendent H. M. Bush reported in November, 1868, that Talladega was a good school controlled by "Christian teachers heartily in the work."¹⁵

By 1868 the A. M. A. was convinced that thorough normal training was needed at Talladega, for thousands of Alabama black children were receiving no instruction because the North could not provide sufficient teachers. Furthermore, prejudice against black schools was still great. Bureau superintendent R. H. Harper claimed in 1868 that hostility had never been "more bitter and defiant." Some schools had been burned, two teachers had been beaten and numerous others had difficulty securing board. White families who had rented to teachers had been threatened with violence. In 1870 the new Bureau superintendent Edwin Beecher wrote that prejudice still prevented using white teachers in many areas. Black instructors, however, could go where whites would not be tolerated; therefore, black teachers must be trained if the black youth were to be educated.¹⁶

In keeping with their plan to organize a normal school A. M. A. officials began a campaign for funds to build a dormitory. Since many of the pupils were in primary grades,

¹⁴Beard, *Crusade of Brotherhood*, 173-74; *History of the American Missionary Association, With Facts and Anecdotes illustrative of its Work in the South* (2nd. ed., 1874), 35; Fred Brownlee, *New Day Ascending* (Boston, 1946), 197.

¹⁵H. M. Bush to J. W. Alvord, November 17, 1868, Bureau Records.

¹⁶J. W. Alvord, *Sixth Semi-Annual Report on Schools For Freedmen*, July 1, 1868 (Washington, D. C., 1868), 31; Edwin Beecher, *Alabama School Report*, July 1, 1870, H. M. Burt to J. W. Alvord, March 19, 1868, Bureau Records, Ed. Div.

and therefore quite young, and most students were from outside the city, some kind of boarding arrangement was needed. Money was soon forthcoming from the Reverend L. Foster of Blue Island, Illinois, and from the Freedmen's Bureau. On August 7, 1869, the cornerstone was laid for Foster Hall, a girls' dormitory.¹⁷ The ceremony was a festive affair with approximately 400 black and white Talladegans in attendance. The *Talladega Sun* had earlier claimed that Brown and Mrs. Beebe were "doing wonders in the way of furnishing first class teachers." The editor left the cornerstone laying ceremony "impressed with high hopes and great expectations in behalf of the moral, intellectual, social and political interests" of blacks.¹⁸ In 1869 Talladega was also chartered as a college.

In January, 1871, school officials issued a circular stating purpose, cost to students, and requirements. The school's object had been, and would continue to be, the circular read, the preparation of students for successful and thorough teaching. Tuition was one dollar and room and board ten dollars a month. The school gave jobs to as many students as possible to help pay costs. To be admitted as boarders students must be fifteen or have passed satisfactory exams in reading, writing, spelling, elements of English grammar, general geography, and arithmetic through general fractions. Good moral character was also required. Prospective students were warned that "those who had not a fixed purpose to improve their time, and an earnest desire to fit themselves for usefulness, should not seek admission, as the presence of such is not tolerated." Talladega claimed above all to be a "School of Christian learning," non-sectarian and animated by a desire "to enforce the principles of good morals and inculcate the necessity of an earnest personal religion." The course of study for normal students would be a thorough review of algebra, geometry, natural science, mental and moral philosophy, history, and theory and practice of teaching.¹⁹ Since a majority of pupils would continue to be elementary, normal students could practice teach in the lower grades. The Talladega experience refutes the charge that black colleges

¹⁷*Talladega Sun*, August 21, 1869; H. E. Brown to G. Whipple, June 15, 1869, M. E. Strieby to E. P. Smith, December 3, 1869, AMAA.

¹⁸*Talladega Sun*, April 1, July 15, August 21, 1869; H. E. Brown to E. M. Cravath, August 11, 1869, AMAA.

¹⁹*Circular of the Normal and Preparatory Departments of Talladega College 1870-1871* (1871) 5, 7-8, 10-11.

offered their students higher education before they were ready. For years Talladega offered only elementary and normal training. College officials did not begin planning college work until 1879 and no college courses were outlined in the catalog until 1890. The first college degree was granted in 1895.²⁰

In addition to the above curriculum religion was taught in the classroom. Indeed some teachers seemed more interested in the students' spiritual state than their progress in geometry. The number of conversions was enthusiastically reported. "It is a fundamental rule with us," Lewis Tappan wrote in 1864, "that all the teachers . . . shall be persons of evangelical religious principles." Executive Secretary George Whipple vetoed the appointment of three teachers in 1866 even though he assumed they were good instructors because he doubted "their hearts are in it, as a great religious enterprise."²¹ The Reverend Mr. Brown wrote in 1869 that six new family altars had been established during the recent week of prayer and "some hearts consecrated during the first time to the Lord. . . ." Brown proudly announced that students were trained in religion as well as academics. Nine-tenths of the students who left Talladega to teach would read the Bible and pray in their schools, he said. Whiskey had been abolished, Brown added, and the fight against tobacco had been almost won. An 1870 report indicated that "religious interest among us is steadily increasing and we are hoping much for a revival—a harvest time after so much seed sowing." Students were constantly preached to and prayed over until they were saved and then were continuously watched to be certain they had been "soundly converted."²²

Both faculty and students carried the gospel off campus. In January, 1871, Talladega students were operating fourteen different Sabbath school. From their mission work sprang the first black Sabbath School Convention in the South. It was held at Talladega, April, 1871, and met annually thereafter for many years. By 1874, the convention had an attendance of approxi-

²⁰D. O. W. Holmes, *The Evolution of the Negro College* (New York, 1934), 99.

²¹L. Tappan to G. B. Willcox, November 21, 1864, Lewis Tappan Papers; G. Whipple to S. Hunt, June 21, 1866, AMAA.

²²H. E. Brown to E. P. Smith, January 14, March 12, 1869, H. E. Brown to American Bible Society, February 18, 1869, J. H. Brown to E. M. Cravath, November 2, 1870, April 3, 1874, AMAA.

mately 400 representing more than 80 Sunday schools. The faculty also held numerous revivals on and off campus.²³ Teachers who did not fit into the religious mold were not long tolerated. In 1874, Miss A. Eleanor Potter scandalized Talladega faculty. One teacher wrote A. M. A. officials that she was “not a *professing Christian*, not even a *professing Christian*. That she had openly admitted.” Another instructor after excusing himself for causing “pain by evil tidings” reported that Miss Potter sat in her room sewing on Sunday mornings and refused when students asked her to hold a prayer meeting in her class. She was a pleasant, kind woman, the instructor added, but he thought officials should be made aware of her “moral principles.”²⁴ Miss Potter’s contract was not renewed.

Not surprisingly, discipline was rigid and punishment of offenders was severe. The 1871 catalog correctly claimed that “the discipline is strict. . . . Prompt and hearty obedience is required of all.” Profane language, intoxicating beverages and tobacco were strictly prohibited. Use of slang was discouraged because “slang leads to swearing and swearing you know leads to *eternal destruction*.” Students could not leave campus without the principal’s permission. The 1873 catalog added cards, dice, billiards and “everything tending to immorality of life” to the prohibited list. All students were required to have a Bible and attend evening and morning prayers and regular religious services on Sunday. No visitors were to be received on the Sabbath and students could not travel to and from school on Sunday. No finery was permitted “Economy and good taste” demanded “plain and simple clothing.” No food could be sent to students. Men and women were not to exchange notes or letters. Violation of these rules brought summary punishment. A half dozen students who attended a circus were reprimanded before the entire school. A young woman suspected of the “evil practice” of “criminal intimacy” with a male student was forced from the school. The young man who denied that sexual relations had occurred but “admitted that they had planned to carry

²³*History of the American Missionary Association*, 34; Talladega Monthly School Report, January, 1871, S. White to E. M. Cravath, August 15, 1873, H. E. Brown to E. M. Cravath, August 7, 1873, AMAA.

²⁴A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, October 29, 1874, J. N. Brown to E. M. Cravath, November 16, 1874, AMAA.

it out," was talked to about "the heinousness of his sin" and urged to repent before being indefinitely suspended.²⁵

Talladega's emphasis on moral and religious training did not allay all white hostility. Many Talladega whites grudgingly accepted the school but animosity was always just beneath the surface and the white faculty were treated at best with polite indifference. Though some of the teachers themselves were flawed by color prejudice and vowed to use "the weapons of love, sympathy and charity" in their conflict with white Alabamians, they still considered whites diseased with racism and sometimes, according to one of the teachers, acted "upon the principle that the *colored* man is worth *ten* white men." And despite their own prejudices the faculty advocated universal manhood suffrage and full equality. They taught by example as well. One of their teaching techniques was living, eating, and worshipping with blacks.²⁶ To train students in social graces frequent receptions were held to which blacks and sympathetic whites were invited. This social mingling was a constant irritation to local whites. The teachers were annoyed by white ostracism and social regulations. In 1870 two teachers, one black and one white, were ordered out of a first-class railway car. They went to the smoking car accompanied by sneers and hisses. The two women were jeered, threatened, and disembarked at Talladega amid "threats and oaths."²⁷

In the fall of 1870 there was considerable fear of violence on campus. The Klan was operating in the area and two black schools in the county, both taught by former Talladega students, were burned. Irving Jenkins was seized by five disguised men while teaching. Although wounded, Jenkins managed to escape, but his school house was burned. Dallas McClellan was also forced to watch his school burn to the ground. The fact that local blacks promised to burn the town, if Talladega College

²⁵*Circular of the Normal and Preparatory Departments of Talladega College 1870-1871* (1871), 8-9; *Catalog of Talladega College 1873-1874*, 22; *Catalog of Talladega College 1874-1875*, 31; *Southern Sentinel*, I (December, 1877), 4, 7, II (September, 1878), 6; Minutes of the Prudential Committee of Talladega College, April 5, 1892, Talladega College Historical Collections, Talladega, Alabama.

²⁶A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, May 14, 1871, AMAA; Bond, *Social and Economic Influences*, 117.

²⁷*American Missionary*, XIV (December, 1870), 283.

was destroyed, gave little comfort to faculty and students.²⁸ After approximately fifty Klansmen started marching from the courthouse toward campus, before being dissuaded by some local citizens, the Reverend Mr. Brown wrote to New York for a revolver, cartridges, and a half-dozen Henry rifles. The rifles were used on at least one occasion. In August, 1871, a man discovered attempting to set the school on fire was shot at, but escaped on horseback. Students and local blacks guarded the campus each night. It was thought that most Talladega whites opposed burning the college for fear it would be an excuse to send federal troops.²⁹ A number of students were threatened but none was killed.³⁰

Although the most frightening, white violence was only one of the many problems with which Talladega College had to contend. Black desire for education had not declined. Many young people wanted to attend school, but were too poor to pay fees. The college had little money and could support only a limited number of students. Frequently prospective students came to Talladega offering to work their way through school. In 1870 a teacher wrote that two young men walked twenty-five miles arriving at midnight with no funds asking for an opportunity to work for board and tuition. They were fed and sent away. Many students were unable to dress properly. In February, 1871, A. A. Safford asked the A. M. A. to send shoes as quickly as possible. "Some of the young men will have to go *barefoot* ere long."³¹ Numerous students taught rural public schools during the summer months to earn money for college, but frequently the state failed to pay them for many months. Those who taught during the summer of 1872 were still waiting for their money in October and had been informed that they would not

²⁸Talladega *Sun*, July 1, 1869; J. N. Brown to E. M. Cravath, September 19, 26, October 13, 1870, AMAA.

²⁹J. N. Brown to E. M. Cravath, September 19, October 15, 1870, J. J. Strong to E. M. Cravath, August 14, 21, 1871, AMAA.

³⁰One man, William Luke, who was associated with Talladega College and the A. M. A. was lynched. Luke came from Canada to Talladega where he joined the college church and worked in a Sunday School. He was sent upon request as a missionary to Patona. He was insulted, threatened, fired at and finally in July, 1870 hanged by a lynch mob. He was accused of advocating interracial marriage. *American Missionary*, XIV (October, 1870), 236; Bond, *Social and Economic Influences*, 117.

³¹A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, December 13, 1870, February 14, 1871, J. N. Brown to E. M. Cravath, October 7, 1870, AMAA.

be paid before 1873. The college was allowing them to charge their fees although the school was experiencing difficulty in providing food. In 1874 a number of students were forced to leave because they had not been paid for their summer teaching. In January, 1876, only one student had paid his bill in full for the year and it had been paid by the A. M. A. Money was a constant problem for students, particularly for the boarders.³² Parents made great sacrifices to assist their children, but the post-war years were depressed ones for most Alabamians, especially blacks. A *Harper's* correspondent visiting Talladega was startled to discover that black women were "eager and willing to do more than a man's work, if by it they could only send their children to school."³³

Sometimes the teachers had little more money than students. A. M. A. salaries were extremely low and frequently in arrears. In 1876, Mary McAssey was paid \$120 for eight months teaching. Of course she lived in the teachers "home" so board was furnished. She was \$700 in debt for her own college education and during the four months she did not teach she had to pay rent and buy food. In March, 1876, John P. Richardson was still trying to get a settlement of his last year's salary.³⁴ Boarding conditions for both students and faculty were far from luxurious. Food was plain and limited in amounts. Teachers helped provide food by preserving fruit and vegetables during the summer. Cold and windy classrooms were heated only by fireplaces. Teachers and students were forced to wear coats in class during cold weather. Some of the dormitory rooms were unfurnished. Miss Josephine Pierce tried to furnish the rooms in Foster Hall by appealing to the North. The name of the individual or group which furnished a room would be placed on the door. She managed to furnish sixty-one rooms in that way. Miss Pierce ingeniously carpeted her own room by securing a piece of carpet, tying a string to it and dragging it from her bed at night to the washstand in

³²A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, October 14, 1872, May 23, 1873, May 17, 1874, October 29, 1874, Safford to M. E. Strieby, January 19, 1876, D. L. Hickok to M. E. Strieby, November 20, 1877, AMAA.

³³*Harper's Weekly*, XXIV (December 4, 1880), 781.

³⁴M. McAssey to M. E. Strieby, June 1, 1876, J. P. Richardson to M. E. Strieby, March 16, 1876, G. Stanley Pope to M. E. Strieby, May 22, 1876, AMAA.

the morning and to her desk when she worked.³⁵ Frances Littlefield, the matron, wrote in 1872 that she had all the campus bedding washed and had "made great effort to exterminate the *vermin* and I think I have succeeded."³⁶

More frustrating to the faculty than their small salaries was their dependence. The school was controlled from New York by the A. M. A. The principal had to operate on credit and was frequently embarrassingly late in settling accounts with local merchants. No action which required money could be taken without authorization from New York. In 1871, A. A. Safford wrote New York asking permission to build a much needed privy for female students at Swayne Hall. Eleven months later H. E. Brown was still writing New York explaining the need for additional bathroom facilities for Talladega girls. Sometimes it was virtually impossible to get a decision from headquarters. Long range plans were unrealistic. Teachers were frequently unable to determine whether they would be employed the following year.³⁷ Constant financial problems and the difficulty in getting decisions from New York tended to create severe morale problems among the faculty.³⁸

The many frustrations and limited facilities did not prevent the efficient training of numerous students. Though the major emphasis was reputedly normal training, there were frequently more students in primary work. Since there were few black schools nearby, Talladega had to offer primary and intermediate work in order to bring students to normal level. In December, 1870, there were ninety-two youths enrolled at Talladega, fifty-seven of whom were in the normal depart-

³⁵J. Pierce to E. M. Cravath, February 13, 1872, May 13, 1874, A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, October 12, 1871, F. Littlefield to E. M. Cravath, August 18, 1872, L. E. Brown to E. M. Cravath, September 18, 1873, AMAA.

³⁶A. A. Safford to E. M. Cravath, October 30, 1871, H. E. Brown to E. M. Cravath, September 4, 1872, J. P. Richardson to M. E. Strieby, May 3, 1876, AMAA.

³⁷A. M. A. officials did not deliberately frustrate their teachers. The Association was attempting to operate many schools with limited funds. Often they were simply unable to respond to financial needs of its teachers. At times it seemed that A. M. A. officials thought that no response to a request or question was better than a negative one.

³⁸Monthly School Reports, October - December, 1870, Monthly School Reports, January - May, 1871, Monthly School Reports, October - December, 1872, AMAA.

ment. For three months, in 1871, Talladega served as a public school and enrollment increased to 284. During these months, those who taught elementary level were paid by the county, thereby relieving some of the A. M. A.'s financial burden. Enrollment varied considerably for several years. It was not uncommon for students to save enough money to attend for one to three months and then work several months to save for another short school session.³⁹

By 1873 the normal work had been divided into two years lower normal and two years higher normal, and a college preparatory course had been added. Most students were in lower normal. The normal course was a relatively rigorous program. Each year was divided into three terms. First-year lower normal students studied elementary arithmetic, grammar, geography, and practical arithmetic. Second-year students studied the same subjects and added United States history, grammar analysis, and English composition. First-year higher normal courses included algebra, English literature, physiology, history, and English grammar and analysis. During the second year mathematics, geometry, physical geography, natural philosophy, botany, and teaching theory and practice were added. The last two years of higher normal were similar to the college preparatory course which included mathematics, English, history, geometry, and quite liberal doses of Latin and Greek. By 1874-1875 there were thirty-seven in lower normal, nine in higher normal and fifteen in college preparatory. There were 172 pupils in pre-normal grades.⁴⁰

Talladega did not graduate its first normal class until 1876. A majority of students were forced to withdraw before completing the full course. Albert Brown managed to remain in school only seventeen out of thirty-six months. A. Gleaden was in school twelve months out of three years. Others were even less fortunate. Both these young men depended upon public school teaching to earn school expenses. Public schools for black youth lasted from one to three months. Brown taught a one and one-half month session for which he received eleven

³⁹Monthly School Reports, January - June, 1873, AMAA; *Catalog of Talladega College, 1873-1874*, 14-18, *Catalog of Talladega College, 1874-1875*, 6-14.

⁴⁰Kate S. Mattison to E. M. Cravath, October 7, 1870, AMAA.

dollars. Gleaden received ten dollars for a two month term.⁴¹ Because of financial problems Talladega students frequently required several years to complete normal training.

The number of graduates gives only a small indication of the number of persons taught by Talladega students. In 1871 students were teaching in thirty-one schools within a twenty-mile radius of Talladega. Samuel White, teaching at Kings Chapel school, had 112 pupils. In addition he had charge of six Sabbath schools. Between 1870 and 1875 Talladega students taught 13,825 pupils in 255 different Alabama schools. Others were instructing in Tennessee, Georgia, and Mississippi. In addition Talladegans had taught 16,126 pupils in 247 Sabbath schools. They had also assisted in organizing several churches.⁴² Although Talladega College was small and had limited resources, it had a major impact on black Alabamians.

In keeping with the A. M. A.'s concern for religious instruction a theology department was organized in 1872 offering a four-year course directed at giving students, in addition to Bible and theology, some courses they would normally have taken in college. The Reverend Henry Brown was in charge of this small department. In 1873 there were only ten students, two of them part-time. Though much pre-occupied with religion, the A. M. A. never understood the significance and importance of black religion to the black community. Blacks were recognized as a "peculiarly" religious people, but many A. M. A. officials were appalled, at what they considered to be the ignorance of black ministers and the emotionalism of their churches. They tried to train young Congregational ministers to counter the old, powerful preacher; however, A. M. A. was never successful in spreading Congregationalism in the South,

⁴¹*Catalog of Talladega College, 1875-1876*, 26-28; S. White to E. M. Cravath, September 26, 1873, January 16, 1874, Monthly School Report, August, 1874, AMAA; *History of the American Missionary Association*, 34.

⁴²J. N. Brown to E. M. Cravath, November 2, 1870, H. E. Brown to E. M. Cravath, October 22, 1872, January 20, October 29, 1874, J. N. Brown to M. E. Strieby, July 12, 1875, G. M. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, August 24, 1875, AMAA; *Catalog of Talladega College, 1873-1874*, 6; U. S. Commissioner of Education, *Report for the Year 1872* (Washington, 1873), 7; *American Missionary*, XVI (December, 1872), 276-278; *The Advance*, VIII (November 12, 1874), 199.

although several churches were established in Alabama,⁴³ and the theology at Talladega never surpassed the Normal school in importance.

In 1878 a change of leadership occurred at Talladega which proved almost ruinous to the college. H. E. Brown of Columbus, Nebraska, had been the first principal and minister. Brown steered the school from an elementary one to one with an emphasis on Normal training. Under Brown the school was graded and the faculty increased from four to eight. In 1871 Brown was supplanted by A. A. Safford of Evanston, Illinois. Safford further graded the normal school and was able to increase the faculty to twelve. Brown returned in 1874 but internal bickering led to his departure in 1875. In that same year the Reverend George W. Andrews of Collinsville, Connecticut, was sent to Talladega to take charge of the church and theological department. The Reverend Andrews, a petty man, believed that academic work should be secondary to religious instruction and began a campaign against Safford, whom he claimed, had been "inimical" to the Theology department. Executive Secretary M. E. Strieby was convinced and Safford was relieved in 1876.⁴⁴

Andrews, now in charge, was determined to make Talladega a theological school. However, he was such an inefficient manager that G. Stanley Pope, a long-time A. M. A. worker in Selma, had to be brought in to assist. Pope, a minister himself and in favor of the theological department, still assumed that normal training should be Talladega's main thrust. Another back-biting campaign by Andrews, assisted by a new teacher, E. P. Lord, succeeded in having Pope removed in 1877.⁴⁵ Andrews discovered too late that his new co-conspirator was "arbitrary, petty and wilful."⁴⁶ Lord was given charge of the school. Talladega could withstand the internal petty

⁴³Colleagues reported that Brown was full of "projects but deficient in systematic effort," and that he was the "weakest preacher" in a southern pulpit. G. Stanley Pope to M. E. Strieby, July 10, 1875, G. W. Andrews, G. Stanley Pope to M. E. Strieby and George Whipple, August 9, 1875, AMAA.

⁴⁴W. G. Marts to M. E. Strieby, May 2, 1876, A. A. Safford to M. E. Strieby, May 11, 1876, AMAA.

⁴⁵E. P. Lord and G. W. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, June 12, 1877, G. Stanley Pope, to M. E. Strieby, July 13, 1877, AMAA.

⁴⁶Mrs. H. W. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, June 7, 1878, AMAA.

quarrelling, and financial problems, but the leadership of Andrews and Lord severely damaged the school.

For years the Talladega faculty had been concerned about the school's direction. They wished to develop a first-rate college, but they believed the A. M. A. favored Fisk and Atlanta. When the Association had to retrench, as it did in 1876, Talladega seemed to suffer most. Andrews was unconcerned about collegiate or normal work, and Lord, who at first favored developing a college, decided to turn Talladega into an agricultural and mechanical school.⁴⁷ The idea of industrial training was not new at Talladega. From the beginning students had worked on campus to earn a part of their fees. In 1870, in order to cut food costs, it was decided to farm the college land. A. A. Safford bought a pair of mules, some fruit trees, and garden seed. In September, 1872, Safford said the farm has produced all the irish potatoes, cucumbers, squash, beans, and tomatoes needed for the dining room. More than 1,200 bundles of fodder had been gathered, and he expected 125 bushels of corn and 200 bushels of sweet potatoes.⁴⁸ Later the college began to raise cattle for meat. The object of these farming activities was to provide food for the school, not to teach agriculture.

In 1876-77 Lord established an agriculture and industrial department. A printing press recently donated to the school was being used to train young men at printing. In 1877 Connecticut donors helped purchase the 160 acre Winsted farm for Talladega. Students spent more and more time on the farm and less time in the classroom. Lord's views were expressed in the *Southern Sentinel*, the college newspaper, which began publishing in 1878. "The great mass of the colored people are and must be," Lord wrote, "tillers of the soil." Blacks must gain "more enterprise and more intelligent methods" of farming. Lord attempted to get federal funds for

⁴⁷N. E. Willis to E. M. Cravath, April 7, 1874, E. P. Lord to M. E. Strieby, February 16, April 20, 1877, G. W. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, February 22, 1877, AMAA.

⁴⁸A. A. Safford to M. S. Cook, January 28, 1871, Safford to E. M. Cravath, September 5, 1872, AMAA.

⁴⁹E. P. Lord to M. E. Strieby, July 7, 1877, W. E. Wheeler to M. E. Strieby, August 7, 1878, J. E. Roy to M. E. Strieby, December 10, 1878, AMAA; *Southern Sentinel*, I (May, 1878), 1, (June, 1878), 8, II (February, 1879), 4.

Talladega as an A & M college.⁴⁹ In the fall of 1878 Lord even opened a store to sell produce from the farm and products from the industrial department. Local whites seemed to be pleased by the new trend at Talladega, but most of the students and many of the faculty were not. A. M. A. officials finally realized that Lord was turning most students into laborers rather than teachers. He was not returned after the spring of 1879 and the attitude toward agricultural and industrial education quickly changed. The fall issue of the *Sentinel* claimed that the previous year's experience had proved that the best results were not attained by allowing students to earn all their school expenses by working, for too little time was thus left for academic work.⁵⁰

Even more damaging to Talladega than Andrews and Lord's lack of interest in normal education were their racial views. In the early years at Talladega prejudice was openly faced and essential racial equality was proclaimed. The shift away from emphasis on equality seemed not to have affected the Talladega faculty until Lord and Andrews took charge. The Reverend Mr. Andrews had a low opinion of black people and refused to stay or eat with black families while traveling in the country. He seldom discussed publicly his views of the "*dreadful immorality, and the momentous, unrecognized and unsettled problems*" of blacks, but Talladega's constituency could hardly have failed to sense his attitude.⁵¹ Both Andrews and Lord catered to local white prejudice in an attempt to gain white support of the school.

Even more injurious to Talladega College was Lord's public humiliation of J. F. Childs, a prominent black man from Marion, Alabama, at the 1877 commencement exercises. Childs and a female companion attended a school concert. When they arrived only a few seats were unoccupied. When Childs started to sit down he was told by an usher that Lord had reserved those seats for whites. Childs sent the usher to talk to Lord, sat down and refused to move. Lord without speaking to the visitor went to the platform and according to Childs, "drove us from the building not as you would drive a good dog, but as you

⁴⁹E. P. Lord to M. E. Strieby, October 8, 1878, AMAA; *Southern Sentinel*, II (September, 1879), 4.

⁵¹G. W. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, February 28, 1876, April 26, 1876, AMAA.

would drive the meanest and lowest brute." Lord announced that there were some present who did not wish to conform with the rules and had taken seats reserved for whites. Childs and his companion were the only ones who had not conformed to the segregated seating pattern. Lord asked them to leave the building at once. Childs, accompanied by his brother Stephen, who was a member of the Talladega board of trustees, walked out. Naturally both were indignant.

Childs wrote an angry letter to the A. M. A. asking if Lord had the right to reserve seats in "our concerts" for white men? Must black ladies stand as Talladega white men sat? And did "our educator" have the right to demonstrate to the whites that were present "that we were not fit to occupy seats with them, even in our own house?" Childs added that it was an injustice to Talladega blacks to impose Lord upon them. A man such as Lord should not be allowed even to go among black people much less teach them. Lord's action had insulted the entire Talladega black community. Unfortunately, A. M. A. secretary M. E. Strieby, though disturbed at Lord's tactlessness, unwisely supported the Talladega principal. Strieby reminded Childs that he had received benefit from the A. M. A. because he had attended Fisk. Strieby's response made it appear to black Alabamians that the Association had abandoned its long-standing policy of racial equality.⁵²

Certainly the Childs' incident offended Alabama blacks. Talladega was supposed to be their college. In 1877 every major city had black representatives at commencement. Excursion trains had taken large groups from Selma and Montgomery. In 1878 there were no excursion trains. There were no "leading" black men outside the county present at the 1878 commencement.⁵³ Lord's pandering to white prejudice, by deemphasizing normal and college prep training and by introducing the color line on campus, had alienated those whom Talladega was founded to serve.

During its first decade Talladega had been beset by white

⁵²J. F. Childs to M. E. Strieby, July 3, August 14, 1877, E. P. Lord to M. E. Strieby, July 30, September 12, 1877, H. C. Bullard to D. E. Emerson, July 17, 1877, AMAA.

⁵³H. E. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, June 29, 1878, G. W. Andrews to M. E. Strieby, June 29, 1878, AMAA.

prejudice, poverty, Ku Klux Klan threats, inadequate financing, A. M. A. neglect and, often, poor leadership. Despite these difficulties the school had survived. Its students had taught thousands of Alabamians. Still others became physicians, lawyers, businessmen, ministers and community leaders. Black Alabamians had pride in "their college." Lord's leadership threatened to end all that. In 1878 it seemed that the Talladega dream of a first-rate institution for Alabama blacks might never materialize.

Fortunately, A. M. A. officials realized their error in sustaining Professor Lord. An 1879 decision to make Talladega a college resulted in the fortuitous appointment of Henry S. DeForest as president.⁵⁴ Within two years a black newspaper could claim that "Talladega College is an Institution of which every Alabamian should be proud."⁵⁵ Most blacks in Alabama would echo that sentiment. Under DeForest's leadership Talladega slowly and steadily, against great obstacles, progressed toward becoming a fine liberal arts college. Talladega College would reflect the masthead motto of the *Southern Sentinel*, "The Noblest Act of Man: To Help a Brother On."

⁵⁴Lord's leadership at Talladega probably would have ended soon for another reason. Before going to Talladega Lord had taught at Emerson Institute at Mobile where he had become engaged to a co-worker. In the spring of 1878 three Emerson teachers discovered in conversation that each was engaged to marry Lord. Further investigation revealed that he was engaged to still three other A. M. A. teachers. Lord was promising to marry all six of the women with a wedding date set for each from two months to two years in the future. B. F. Koons to T. N. Chase, July 1, 1878, AMAA.

⁵⁵Huntsville *Gazette*, August 20, 1881.

A PROGRESSIVE ERA FOR EDUCATION IN ALABAMA 1935-1951

by

William B. Lauderdale

In light of the present image of public education in Alabama, it may seem a bit bizarre to identify the State as an educational leader for any era. Yet there was a time when, in the midst of a national economic depression and in a region of generally depleted financial and social resources, a significant number of schools in Alabama rose above their circumstance to be on the forefront of educational innovation. To be sure, it was a short-lived phenomenon, lasting in spirit and action little more than a decade. However, the conditions and events which led to both the development and the demise of the movement do represent a microcosm for the study of general principles of educational change. That alone warrants analysis of the period. A review of the movement may be instructive in other ways as well.

The social context of today's classroom is so varied and complex and educational purpose so ambivalent that even the most well-meaning and able teacher is likely to be drawn into a sense of total frustration and cynicism. A striking aspect of the Alabama movement is that the response of a significant number of teachers was just the opposite of this, in that an overwhelmingly difficult situation was catalytic to positive action and even a sense of optimism. Giving proper attention to that response allows their actions to serve as a case study of the way in which the romantic spirit can surface, on a broad basis, in the most unlikely of circumstance.

That spirit began to coalesce in the fall of 1935. It is not ironic that the type of educational innovations that began to develop was closely akin to the national progressive movement, when the latter movement was steeped in ideals of social reform. The reasons for this approach in Alabama will become obvious.

In spite of the fact that the entire country was in the grips of a depression, figures between 1929 and 1933 still demonstrate a "wide discrepancy between incomes in Alabama and those in other regions."¹ Statistics indicated that "the Ala-

¹*Social and Economic Conditions in Alabama* (Alabama State Department of Education, Curriculum Bulletin No. 3, Montgomery, 1937), 33.

bama worker, either in industry or in agriculture (was) at a distinct disadvantage as to income."² Also, there was an occupational shift of some significance in Alabama. Wage earners in industry decreased 28.7 per cent from 1929 to 1933 while workers in agriculture increased by 10.6 per cent, indicating that the high rate of industrial unemployment was forcing workers back to the farm. When jobs were available on the farm and in industry, children made up an important part of the labor force. In 1937, 24 per cent of the children 10 to 17 years old were gainfully employed in Alabama, compared to a national average of 11.3 per cent.³

Agriculture was the occupation of nearly one half of Alabama's workers, and rural conditions were among the most deplorable. For example, in 1934, 45 per cent of the rural homes were structurally unsound, only 3 per cent had access to electric lights, over 90 per cent were using wood stoves for cooking, and with less than 1 per cent having flush toilets, 11 per cent of the homes had no toilet facilities, either indoor or outdoor.⁴

Food was scarce and the diets provided an excess of fats, sweets and starches with a marked deficiency in fruits, vegetables, milk, meat and eggs. There was widespread whooping cough, measles, pellagra, malaria and severe hookworm infection.⁵ Put succinctly, in 1935, masses of Alabama young people lived in homes that were without plumbing, electricity, adequate food, or economic security. They were going to school ill fed, poorly clothed, and infected with a variety of diseases. When at school, they were faced with a curriculum aimed at disciplining their minds, teaching them basic morality, and introducing them to the great ideas of the Western world, through the academic disciplines. This rigid, subject-centered curriculum, in the face of such intolerable social conditions, was so obviously anachronistic that there emerged a wide spread mood and concern among educators and lay people alike regarding the need for serious and even radical educational change. Further, the circumstance encouraged thinking along the lines of a philosophy which addressed itself in a fundamental way to the relationship of education to social and economic problems.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*, 31-46.

⁴*Ibid.*, 48-50.

⁵*Ibid.*, 61-65.

Therein lies the common bond between the Alabama movement in the 1930's and the spirit of social reform that characterized the national progressive education movement in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.

At the very time that the mood of the Alabama populace created a climate for change, educational leadership emerged statewide to begin giving direction to that change. In 1935, Dr. C. B. Smith was named by State Superintendent J. A. Keller to the newly created post of State Director of the Division of Instruction. Smith went to that position intellectually and attitudinally prepared for educational change, being familiar with new programs initiated in states like Mississippi and Virginia and with particular interest and enthusiasm about the nationally famous Denver Program.

His first assignment as State Director of the Division of Instruction was to continue his own education in a way that would serve the State in the development of a format for curriculum change on a broad basis.⁶ To accomplish this, C. B. Smith chose to go to Teachers College, Columbia University.⁷

⁶Taken from a tape of the author's interview with Dr. C. B. Smith in Troy, Alabama, August, 1972.

⁷In reading history of education works, one gets a certain feel of how important Teachers College was during this period in the production of educational leaders on an international scale. Doing research which involves a specific geographic region, the Teachers College impact becomes even more vivid. Apparently, young, bright, aggressive Alabamians who were dedicated to the profession of education, overwhelmingly saw either George Peabody College or Teachers College, Columbia University as the institution to select for graduate study. Choosing Peabody is understandable in that it was a quality school that was geographically close. But the fact that so many young people from rural Alabama were willing to make a substantial sacrifice in order to attend Teachers College during the depression reveals the high prestige which they accorded that institution. Tracing the background of many who attained crucial educational positions in the State of Alabama during this period shows Teachers College to be the leading institution selected for doctoral work. The impact of Teachers College on the philosophy of education in Alabama is consistently reflected in the curriculum bulletins written during this period. It should be noted also that the faculty of Teachers College reciprocated this loyalty by taking an active interest in the development of progressive education in Alabama. Several people interviewed for this study who attended Teachers College recalled references to the Alabama program being made in lectures and noted that the Teachers College library collected the Alabama curriculum bulletins. Major professors were enthusiastic about doctoral projects which dealt with the educational problems in Alabama and prestigious faculty members like William Heard Kilpatrick visited the State to see the program first hand.

The decision to go to Teachers College was crucial in that it was an institution that very much facilitated a problem-centered approach in its treatment of graduate student programs. Its service to C. B. Smith and Alabama is evidenced by his doctoral project entitled "Final Report on Initiation and Promotion of the State Curriculum Development Program for Alabama." Throughout the entire progressive period Smith's influence in the formulation of Alabama's pattern of curriculum development was to be considerable. Even though he was to be State Director of the Division of Instruction for only two years, he was to remain until the early fifties a member of the State Course of Study Committee. His advice would be sought and his influence continue through his constant contact with the state educational leadership.

Superintendent Keller's selection of an able administrator to direct the Division of Instruction was significant because it was that agency that was selected to carry the burden of curriculum development. The Division of Vocational Education was advised by Keller to support the Division of Instruction in the effort of long range curricular planning. Also, a Central State Committee from Institutions of Higher Learning was set up and directly responsible to the State Director of the Division of Instruction to advise on plans and help steer activities. This latter Committee arose as a result of the enthusiasm demonstrated by educators in institutions of higher learning when their ideas on curriculum development were sought by Superintendent Keller. Initially, this put C. B. Smith in the pivotal position for educational innovation on a statewide basis.

From the late 1930's through the entire period of Alabama's progressive movement, the position of State Director of the Division of Instruction would be filled by another strong administrator, W. Morrison McCall. Of the tremendous number of people involved in the movement, particular mention is given to Smith and McCall primarily because their responsibilities were overwhelming in the variety of tasks that had to be assigned, the number of agencies that were involved, and the complexity of organization that was required to give direction to the statewide efforts. It becomes evident that the State Director of the Division of Instruction's ability to carry out properly such responsibilities of coordination was a necessary

though not sufficient condition for the success of the program. Inept coordination would have been a sufficient condition for the failure of the program.

One aspect of the long range planning began with the hiring of three nationally known consultants who were to become very instrumental in the direction the movement was to take. The head consultant was Dr. H. L. Caswell of George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee. He was assisted by consultants Dr. Doak S. Campbell and Dr. Henry Harap. The Peabody staff was already involved in long range educational improvement programs with other southern states through the Division of Surveys and Field Studies. The inclusion of Alabama as a part of those efforts was, therefore, rather easily facilitated.

One other initial step taken by the State Department of Education was to organize local groups of teachers for curriculum study. These groups were guided by extension teachers from the state colleges.

The plan was essentially then to combine the efforts of the State Department of Education, public colleges in Alabama, public school teachers and administrators, and the Peabody staff in the organization of a "framework for courses of study at the state level that would give somewhat different direction to instruction in schools."⁸ The thrust of concern, however, was not only to produce change in public education at the elementary and secondary levels, but also to reorganize programs of teacher education. It was the judgment of the leaders of the movement that changes in instruction in the public schools would not be lasting without an equally accommodating effort

⁸Taken from a tape of the author's interview with Dr. W. Morrison McCall in Montgomery, Alabama, February, 1973.

by teacher training institutions to produce individuals capable of supporting such changes.⁹

In spite of the rather unwieldy number of people involved as well as the rather vague charge of "improving instruction," results were not long in coming. Local efforts at curriculum planning were begun in 1935. Also, contingents of teachers, administrators, and college instructors began going to George Peabody for workshop sessions. These workshops, of which there were to be many in the first few years of this movement, were generally conducted in a way in which the participants could address themselves to a particular problem. With the help of the Peabody consultants, the individuals from the State would work as a group on a specific topic with sporadic seminars being held with groups from other states which had similar problems to solve.

In 1936, a Peabody group wrote the first curriculum bulletin for Alabama entitled the "Report of Committee on Point of View, Aims and Scope." This was followed up immediately by two more bulletins: "Survey Workbook for Community Analysis" and "Social and Economic Problems of Alabama and Their Implications for Education." Of these three bulletins Superintendent Keller wrote:

"The general argument running through all these discussions was that the times demand that the school must become a more positive factor in the reconstruction of

⁹One topic that came up consistently in the interviews done for this study involved the positive response to progressive education of the laboratory schools in the state colleges that trained teachers. One interview dedicated totally to this topic was with W. B. Dragoin, now the Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Georgia Southwestern College. Dr. Dragoin had been a student in the laboratory school at Troy State Teachers College, Troy, Alabama. He was able to recall vividly the very serious attempts of the Troy laboratory school to prepare future teachers for working in a core curriculum and using new evaluative techniques and progressive methodologies. Though no intentional search was conducted, this author did come across one short written description of Troy's laboratory school program but saw nothing in writing concerning the progressive developments in other state colleges. In light of the number of references made in interviews about substantial changes in laboratory schools during Alabama's progressive era and the contemporary interest in laboratory experiences in teacher education, a definitive historical study of these state colleges and their contributions seems both warranted and necessary.

society, but in doing so it must envision democracy, recognize the democratic process, and plan in accordance with accepted principles of individual and personal development."¹⁰

That statement by Keller characterizes the philosophic mood of the entire movement in Alabama. The voice will be a moderate one. Keller, in the quote, hastens to qualify the concept of reconstruction. There will be no confusion about the process of social reconstructionism in Alabama with the philosophy George Counts expressed in "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" There will be no place in the movement for the avant guard progressive school. When Keller speaks of principles of individual development, he is speaking in the balanced tones of Boyd Bode, not in the radical rhetoric of Margaret Naumburg.

These remarks are intended not to characterize the movement as being ambivalent, but to note its moderation. There was a commitment to a basic philosophic stance. Those who wrote the first curriculum bulletin stated that "after careful study of the different methods of defining scope of the curriculum, the committee has decided upon the *social functions* approach . . . from which the needs and problems in contemporary life may be drawn."¹¹ There was to be amazing consistency in this social approach which was reflected in the various Alabama Curriculum Development Program bulletins written between 1935 and 1941. Furthermore, the concerns were not limited to the curriculum. The nature of democracy, the aims of education and a theory of pedagogy were all central themes in their discourses.

Discussions on the aims of education invariably centered around individual growth within the context of social aims. It was the latter concern that usually took precedent. For example, after commenting that aims of education are really the aims of society, there is the cautionary note that "pupil purposes should not be thought of as educational aims, but they

¹⁰*Narrative Report of State Superintendent, Part I* (Alabama State Department of Education, Montgomery, 1937), 79.

¹¹*Curriculum Bulletin on Orientation* (Alabama State Department of Education, Montgomery, 1937), 67, 68.

should, insofar as possible, be compatible with these aims."¹² All the evidence obtained in researching this study indicates that the philosophy of progressive education in the Alabama movement never got more child-centered than that.¹³ This dialectical tension between a commitment to the individual and to society at times results in equivocations of the type that "it (loyalty) should not be an unreasoning loyalty, but one which sees democracy as the best form of group life for attaining the welfare of the greatest number."¹⁴

Social aims were always couched in the language of democratic ideals. Such phrases as "respect for individual dignity," "helpful interaction of social groups," "social ideals that are dynamic and changing," "individual freedom," and "equality of justice" are typical in the sections of the bulletins describing the nature of democracy. They are definitions of democracy which are consistently liberal in their social orientation. "A well-developed individual can exist only in and through a well-developed whole; and in like manner, a well-developed social whole is possible only in and through well-developed individuals."¹⁵ When dealing with questions about learning, such assumptions are translated to explain that "since learning is preeminently a social process, the school life must be unified, for it is only by participating in the social process that individuals acquire personalities."¹⁶

In a word, there was an attempt by the Alabama educators, consistent with the efforts of many in the national progressive movement, to talk about education in a democratic and social framework, with democracy being defined in terms of a list of value statements. The tone was moderate, and when fitting their purposes, the leaders in Alabama leaned heavily on the writings of people like John Dewey, Harold Rugg, and William Heard Kilpatrick.

¹²*Ibid.*, 48.

¹³The reader should not confuse the broad public school movement dealt with in this paper and the earlier private endeavors of Marietta Johnson and her very child-centered Organic School in Fairhope, Alabama.

¹⁴*Program of Studies and Guide to the Curriculum for Secondary Schools* (Alabama State Department of Education, Curriculum Bulletin No. 9, Montgomery, 1941), 2.

¹⁵*Social and Economic Conditions in Alabama*, 16.

¹⁶*Planning the Core Curriculum in the Secondary Schools* (Alabama State Department of Education, Curriculum Bulletin No. 7, Montgomery, 1940), 5.

The major thrust of curriculum organization, particularly at the secondary level, was toward the idea of the core curriculum. Such a core was to include "those common experiences which all pupils are to have under the guidance of the school, regardless of individual differences in interests and abilities."¹⁷ As was the case with much of the national progressive education movement, the emphasis was on the interrelating of subject matter on these common problems. Normally, the core curriculum was to be in operation anywhere from a half to a fourth of the school day, "the remainder of time being devoted to the special interests of groups or individuals."¹⁸ The special interests were meant to include such organized subject matter as foreign languages, algebra, geometry, home economics, vocational education, etc.¹⁹

Planning according to the core curriculum was not forced on local school systems. It was the dominant theme of those charged with developing statewide materials, however, and their point of view would obviously be influential. As local groups would meet to plan programs for their particular school, they would be confronted with the statewide curriculum bulletins, all of which argued for the very philosophy of democracy, learning, psychology, and child development out of which the core curriculum idea was initially derived. The fact that the bulletins gave suggested units for various grade levels, indicated how to sequence units, and provided directions for administering the plan added to the persuasiveness of the materials. Having been charged with reforming their local programs and having been given guides written by their representatives, one can imagine that acceptance of the core curriculum might have advantages to the rank and file teacher and administrator somewhat beyond what would be justified by the mere weight of argument.

In all fairness, though, as one reads the bulk of materials produced in this period, one gets the feeling that what is really at stake is not so much the indoctrination of a particular philosophy, but an attempt to break out of a longstanding and traditional rigidity of practice and outlook.

¹⁷*Social and Economic Conditions in Alabama*, 58.

¹⁸*Planning the Core Curriculum in the Secondary Schools*, v.

¹⁹*Social and Economic Conditions in Alabama*, 75.

"But it has taken us a third of a century to realize that the school curriculum should be concerned with engaging in activities through which subject matter may be learned, rather than with teaching the traditional school subjects directly. We have come to regard the child not as a species of empty reservoir to be filled as economically and effectively as possible, but as a living creature of endless diversified possibilities in activity and behavior."²⁰

Even the traditional approach is not overlooked for possibilities of innovation. Fully fourteen pages of one bulletin is taken up with suggestions for modifying a subject-centered program as an alternative to the core curriculum.²¹

"The subject matter program also can be carried on in such ways as to meet present needs much more effectively than have many programs heretofore. Effective ways of working in the classroom with pupils, and a wholesome school life are essential to any program. Dead, meaningless recitations will not be more effective under a different name; neither will meaningless activities be more effective under the name of progressive education."²²

The elementary school guidance takes a somewhat different tack than the high school orientation toward the core curriculum. The best indicator of the elementary direction comes from a course of study bulletin for elementary schools written over a three year period by a state-appointed committee, under the chairmanship of the State Supervisor of Elementary Education, Miss Daisy Parton.²³ The emphasis of this work revolves around flexibility of scheduling, taking into account a basic social program (what is normally called an activity program of shared experiences), a program to teach skills, and recreational, creative and daily living activities.

²⁰*Curriculum Bulletin on Orientation*, 54.

²¹*Program of Studies and Guide to the Curriculum for Secondary Schools*, 58-72.

²²*Ibid.*, 27.

²³*Course of Study and Teacher's Guide for the Elementary Schools* (Alabama State Department of Education, Curriculum Bulletin No. 3, Montgomery, 1941).

Once again, the message is progressive in nature. There are the usual reactions against uniform standards and the teaching of skills without considerations of readiness and individual needs, interests, and abilities. Traditional programs, according to the bulletin, have forced children into failure and played upon their fears. Historically, many students have been labeled as dull and inferior by a system of report cards, groupings, and harsh competition with no consideration given to their emotional state, physical development, or past experiences.²⁴

On the positive side, the committee came out in support of the project method, pupil planning, cooperation, democratic living, real life activities, creative handicrafts, social development, individual differences, problem solving, lay-citizen involvement, community schools, visual aids, field trips, conservation, home beautification, and free play. These are but a sampling of the concepts culled from the bulletin. Also included, of course, are ample justifications, recommendations, case studies, and specific suggestions on how to institute a program which takes into account such concepts.

In the same way that the national Progressive Education Association attempted in the early 1920's to avoid a systematic and detailed philosophic statement in favor of encouraging general innovation from local systems, the leaders of the Alabama movement obviously favored elementary and secondary school programs which could take into account the unique situations of various locales, recognizing that those who implement practices are more effective if the program is their own creation. Moreover, the national Progressive Education Association had a platform of assumptions about a good education that was to provide a framework for innovation. Obviously, the Alabama educators agreed not only with the need of such a framework, but also chose assumptions consistent with the national Progressive Education Association platform.

One additional thing should be noted about the character of these state curriculum bulletins, written in the period 1935-41. There is a consistent effort to view the role of the teacher in terms of a much broader scope of responsibility than was the case in the traditional school. The teacher was to be cognizant

²⁴*Ibid.*, 137, 138.

of theories of child growth and development, aware of theories of learning and their application to classroom practice, concerned about the creation of a personal philosophy of education, and interested in the professional involvement of program development. The teacher was to be a master at taking advantage of the interests of students, creating motivating environments, evaluating individuals representing a wide variety of abilities in a heterogeneous group and establishing strong school-community relationships. In a word, the master teacher was an assumed component of the new education. Considering the times, the lot of the teacher and the available market, the educational leadership of the period might be condemned on grounds of naivete'. On the other hand, credit might be given to the leadership for its decision to set a blueprint of expectations out of which a self-fulfilling prophecy might lend some support to greater efforts by and improved results in the ordinary classroom teacher.

The delineation of the philosophy of the movement from the official documents is much easier than the characterization of the consequence of the movement in actual school practice. However, it seems obvious that a great deal of activity was established through the in-service workshops in which teachers not only worked on program development but also began reflecting their concerns in classroom practice. According to Superintendent Keller, "Above 6,000 teachers in 45 local systems actively participated in the special effort to improve instruction"²⁵ in the academic year 1936-37, and that estimated figure of teachers involved in the movement would eventually triple.

The schools which did participate represent an effort which could be scaled on a continuum from meager to highly successful. Obscuring the data available is the fact that only a portion of teachers within a faculty might be involved. Be that as it may, it is still safe to say that a substantial number of schools with substantial numbers of teachers participated in the Alabama Curriculum Development Program.

Further, the effect of the movement shows no geographic or size pattern. Some small rural schools had great success, e.g., Central High School in Lexington, which is at the northern

²⁵*Narrative Report of State Superintendent, Part I, 79.*

most point in Alabama. Larger high schools in the center of the State, such as Tuscaloosa and Montevallo, were quite active in the movement. At the southern most point, Murphy High School in Mobile developed an exemplary core curriculum in the mid 1940's.

The movement developed a two-pronged effect. On the one hand, an entire county might get involved in broad programs of change. Lamar County in the northwest part of the State and Baldwin and Covington counties in the southern part of the State all demonstrated initiative on a county-wide basis. On the other hand, particular schools might show success in a passive or even hostile county. Holtville is an example of a school which went it alone and gained a national reputation for its educational innovations. There seems little doubt that the success of change was dependent on the quality of leadership at either the local or county level.

Because of the great diversity of involvement and success by schools in the movement, it is impossible to label or characterize accurately the consequences in practice of these educational ideas for change. In order to grasp the essential flavor of those changes, however, short case studies or examples of programs which succeeded in improving the circumstance by which children are educated will be presented.

Certainly, the most nationally prominent program in Alabama during the years covered by this study was the one at the Holtville school in Deatsville, under the principalship of James Chrietzberg. In 1938, Holtville was chosen as one of the thirty-three schools to participate in "The Southern Study."²⁶ Articles on Holtville appeared in such publications as the *Southern Association Quarterly*,²⁷ *High School Journal*,²⁸ and even the *Reader's Digest*.²⁹ Add to this the fact that *Life* magazine

²⁶Frank Jenkins, Druzilla Kent, Verner Sims, and Eugene Waters, "Cooperative Study for the Improvement of Education," *Southern Association Quarterly*, X (February and August, 1946).

²⁷James Chrietzberg, "A Rural High School and Its Community," *Southern Association Quarterly*, III (August, 1939), 469-471.

²⁸Vester Mulholland, "Holtville—A Southern Association School," *High School Journal*, XXVII (May, 1944), 87-89.

²⁹Stuart Chase, "Bring Our Youngsters Into the Community," *Reader's Digest*, XL (January, 1942), 9.

published a four page spread on Holtville High School, labeling the school as a place that "has completely taken the lead in all community life by making the community a better, richer place in which to live."³⁰

Readers familiar with the history of American education might assume that such a program would be a logical choice for a case study. However, the very notoriety that the system created and the fact that information about the Holtville school is so readily available to the historical researcher justify the selection of programs for study which are more typical of the broad based innovations that occurred in Alabama in the late 1930's and early 1940's. On this basis, two representative schools which happen to be in the same county, Cullman, were chosen for review as case studies. Both schools contained grades 1 through 12 and they developed their programs relatively independent of one another. They are different in that one school, Fairview, was directly connected to the statewide movement. Administrators and teachers from Fairview attended a Peabody workshop, wrote their own bulletin on the *Improvement of the Curriculum in the Fairview Public Schools*,³¹ and maintained a continuing interest in the statewide activities and literature. The first case study differs from Fairview in that with little overt philosophic interest, and with the barest involvement in the statewide activities, a few teachers broke traditional bounds to open up a new concept of education in Cold Springs, Alabama.

Cold Springs: A Case Study

Cold Springs is a small community in a mountainous region of Alabama. In 1936, the school for the area contained grades 1 through 12, with about 150 to 200 students being served. Most of the teachers lived in a teacherage on the school grounds. Few had college degrees, but most did have a couple of years of normal school training.

The setting was very rural, inhabited by small land owners. In fact, the ordinary farmer had only 40 to 80 acres on which to support what was usually a large family. Crop yield was

³⁰"Democracy in U. S. Schools: Holtville, Ala.," *Life*, X, 68.

³¹*Improvement of the Curriculum in the Fairview Public Schools* (Fairview Public Schools, Cullman, 1940).

in many cases poor and equipment was essentially primitive. For example, within the entire Cold Springs area, which covered approximately a 15 mile radius, there were only 6 to 8 tractors in operation.

The people lived simply. They were politically, socially, and religiously conservative. Movies and dancing were sinful, family ties were strong, neighbors were important and strangers were under suspicion. Rural electrification had all the earmarks of governmental encroachment. There were no bathtubs in the community and very few outdoor toilets. Balance diets were rare and disease, especially infectious hookworm, was common. Individual pride and a sense of dignity were central features in the personality of the farmers in Cold Springs. In an almost poetic characterization of these people and the strength of their feelings, R. L. Yielding commented about the mountain man that "he doesn't accept you too quick, but he won't turn you loose once he's your friend — he'll stay with you there."³²

It was in this setting that a few dedicated teachers broke traditional barriers to address themselves to community needs in a progressive fashion. The very able Superintendent of Education in Cullman County, R. E. Moore, though not one to impose progressive innovation, was supportive of programs in his schools in which change was the central feature. Also, the principal at the Cold Springs' school in the late 1930's, Cranford Burns, was a highly aggressive young man, interested in educational change at both the theoretical and practical level. He would later go to Teachers College, Columbia University for a doctorate, returning to Alabama to become superintendent of schools in Mobile County. Two other people crucial to the progressive move were R. L. Yielding, the vocational agriculture teacher, and Marvin Jasper, the boys' physical education instructor.

In spite of Burns' personal interest, there developed no broad, theoretical program for changing instruction at Cold Springs. The things which happened that were new were primarily a response to obvious community needs. That is, some

³²Taken from a tape of the author's interview with Mr. R. L. Yielding in Beulah, Alabama, August, 1972.

of the faculty, with the strong support of Burns merely viewed their roles as teachers in a much broader sense than what had been traditional and acceptable. With this simple readjustment of responsibilities, long standing problems came under the purview of the school.

As was mentioned, hookworm was a serious community problem. The effects of the infection were obvious and destructive to the total instructional program. To some faculty this meant that infectious hookworm was a school problem. Yielding and Jasper contacted the county health service and set the school up as the first hookworm diagnosis and treatment center in the community. Marvin Jasper also arranged for all teachers and students to be tested for malaria. For those interested in dark humor, it should be noted that Jasper was the only one whose test proved positive.

Hookworm was caused primarily by the fact that people went barefoot and there was a scarcity of toilet facilities. There was a sawmill in the area, lumber was cheap, and culled lumber was just stacked in the lumberyard. The school contacted the owners of the yard and convinced them to donate the culled lumber. Trucks were borrowed and the lumber was hauled to the school grounds. For many young boys, grades 9 to 12, an assigned project was to build an outdoor toilet. After school, Mr. Yielding would hook a trailer to his car, load several privies and take a couple of boys home. He showed them how to install a "john," and hookworm was on its way out in Cold Springs, Alabama. The image of the school had changed. To visualize that change, the reader need only imagine the mountain men's response to passing the school house where 60 new privies, ready to be delivered, were at one time stacked out front.

In light of present day concerns about ecology, it is reassuring to note Cold Springs' program for home beautification. In the form of what is called the project method, young boys developed plans to improve the family yard, planted shrubs at a school plot and transplanted them when ready.

The acceptance of these innovations by the community was probably due to the general acceptance of the teachers involved and the fact that the programs affected directly the conditions

of life. This general acceptance does not mean that the community did not continue to see schools as essentially separate from real life concerns. For example, Mr. Yielding had his students develop an experimental plot on the school grounds to demonstrate proper agricultural methods; that was school business and so the farmers in the area, even when encouraged, paid little attention. However, Mr. Yielding found that if he used the same format on his own land, making clear the procedures used, the men in the community took an interest. Yielding's daughter, Katrina, commented that it was not unusual to arise at daybreak, see a wagon out front and a farmer in the field, "toeing" the ground and "feeling" the crops.

Of course, the community was somewhat discriminating in terms of which innovations they considered acceptable. For example, the women's physical education teacher began teaching folk dancing, which the community associated with square dancing. Since square dancing was thought sinful, members of the community attempted, unsuccessfully, to put a stop to the program. However, the community, though extremely conservative, was generally receptive to educational change. What does seem obvious is that progress was a function of certain personalities on the faculty, which makes it very difficult to sustain change in an isolated community like Cold Springs. What is also obvious is that isolated and conservative communities are not immune to change.

The case of Cold Springs is interesting because at the same time that there was a statewide attempt to improve instruction, a community not in the mainstream of that movement made changes similar in spirit. There was little theorizing in Cold Springs about concepts of learning, the core curriculum and social reconstructionism; merely a gut reaction to community needs and school involvement. There was no restructuring of total programs, only sporadic attacks on problems situationally. To the boys, girls, and adults in the community, the changes were important and the rewards sufficient. In a sense, that was what progressive education was all about.

Fairview: A Case Study

As in Cold Springs, the constituency of the Fairview School was made up of small farmers, socially and politically conser-

vative. A large portion of the student body was bussed in, coming from as far away as twenty miles. However, Fairview, situated twelve miles from the city of Cullman, was not as isolated geographically as Cold Springs and had a considerably larger school population and teaching staff. Grades 1 through 12 at Fairview served about 600 students with a faculty of approximately 25. A substantial number of faculty at Fairview were not local products. Their homes were as far away as Texas and Oklahoma, and they had gravitated to Fairview as a result of informal contacts between Administrators and teachers in Cullman County and Peabody College, the institution from which many of the teachers had graduated. This heterogeneity proved important in attempts to change the program and the connections between Fairview and Peabody were formalized and intensified on a number of fronts as the progressive program developed between the middle 1930's and the middle 1940's. The very time consuming task of creating a new program would be aided by the fact that almost the entire faculty was unmarried, which meant that they had more time and energy free to commit to school problems. Furthermore, they lived in a teacherage on the school grounds which simplified the task of getting faculty to the school for the innumerable planning sessions necessary for school-wide change. While Fairview had a reputation as a quality school in the conventional sense of the term, the circumstance for a shift away from the traditional education approach was there. What was needed was a catalyst.

That catalyst came in the form of a new principal, W. L. Davis, who was also appointed the coordinator of the Cullman County Inservice Educational Program in 1937. Two aspects of the Davis background are important: his graduate study at Peabody and his rather broad based contact with the state educational leadership. The first aspect not only solidified his disposition toward progressive education but also gave him contact with the "Peabody people" he would use extensively in the fostering of an innovative program at and the recruitment of teachers for the Fairview School. The coordination of the Fairview program with the statewide movement would be facilitated by his efforts to know and work with the like-minded people all over the State, and especially in the State Department of Education. He took advantage of opportunities to visit

schools in the State which were attempting to make changes in their programs, and he regularly attended and participated in state conferences aimed at initiating change in school programs. Given that background and a position of leadership with a potentially activist faculty, and Fairview was ripe for change.

The first thing that Davis did at Fairview was to initiate an in-service program of intensive study by the entire faculty, formalized into regular Monday night meetings where those ideas which had been investigated the previous week by the various members of the faculty were discussed. The content of such study ranged from general concerns of existing socio-economic conditions and their effect on learning to the very specific concerns of new innovations in reading programs for various age levels. The source material ranged from nationally published texts to curriculum bulletins developed by the States of Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Faculty members visited other schools in the State, talked to other teachers and attended state conferences and conventions. Also, in the two-year period of their study, Dr. Henry Harap from Peabody visited Fairview approximately seven times to work and give direction to the faculty.

In the summer of 1940, 75 per cent of the faculty at Fairview went to Peabody at their own expense to participate as a group in a workshop designed to synthesize their findings into a broad and systematic program of instruction. Their consultants would be Drs. Harap, Caswell, and Campbell. The group also worked directly with other state groups at Peabody who were dealing with similar projects. The result of the Fairview efforts would culminate in the form of a curriculum bulletin, written and published by the teachers themselves.

As would be expected from a Peabody influence, and the fact that Fairview was trying to coordinate its development with the state program, the curricular concerns of the bulletin revolve around the idea of the core curriculum. As with the state bulletins, the Fairview statement also promotes the inter-relating of subject matter, pupil planning, flexible scheduling, real life activities, the whole child, problem solving, learning by doing, community schools, etc. Serious attention is given to the school's responsibility for health programs, including the

prevention of communicable diseases, spotting and giving aid to undernourished children, and the maintenance of sanitary conditions in the school. Further, there is a detailed section on the physical requirements for a classroom to be both safe and facilitative as a learning environment. There is a very respectable section on the proper use of resource material and one on alternatives for evaluating and reporting student progress.

The bulletin is surprisingly well written with a sure sense of internal consistency and presents a program that reflects significant continuity with the state curriculum bulletins of the late 1930's. Interestingly, there is a slight difference in the philosophic thrust in that the Fairview bulletin gives greater emphasis to the ideology that would later come to be known on the national scene as life-adjustment education. The opening philosophic statement in the Fairview bulletin repeatedly refers to the importance of adjustment, tempering the point, to be sure, with the concern for acclimating children to social change and by pointing out the need to respect individual differences, interests, and needs. Even though the vocational thrust of the life-adjustment movement is not evident in the Fairview philosophy, there is the same spirit of concern for the personal, social, and emotional growth of young people, and these concerns are couched often in the same language that was to be used in the national movement. In the Fairview Curriculum Sequence Chart, for example, study recommendations include the concerns of leisure time, hobbies, consumerism, personal grooming, developing friendships, home beautification, career selection, letter writing, etc. As in the life-adjustment movement, the same emphasis on teaching good citizenship and creating lay support for education are infused throughout the bulletin.

One of the more gratifying experiences to a reader of the bulletin comes through the realization that public school teachers were honestly concerning themselves with broad educational theory and its application to their situation, all the while working their way through and using the ideas of Bode, Dewey, Horne, Kilpatrick, Thayer, Washburne, and Lippman. If nothing else, the progressive efforts in Alabama were a success by creating the circumstance where school teachers found educational literature to be important to their professional endeavors.

The Fairview faculty came back in the fall of 1940 for staff planning meetings. As a group, they made out schedules, developed policy statements for carrying out the philosophy represented in the bulletin and assigned individual responsibilities.

The basement of the Fairview auditorium was converted into a recreation hall to facilitate the community school concept they had decided upon. Parents were invited to a monthly social gathering and buses were used to transport parents from the outlying areas. The idea was that community involvement on school concerns would come about only after the parents got comfortable in the school and with the staff. The best way to initiate this was through play. Therefore, the recreational hall was used for pot-luck dinners, square dancing, shuffleboard, bridge, checkers and rook. Out of these informal interaction groups were developed the contacts for and interest in on-going study groups to deal with school policy. One of the most successful aspects of Fairview's new program was the increasing community support for, and involvement in, educational innovation.

In trying to evaluate the outcome of these efforts by the Fairview teachers, administrators, parents, and students, W. L. Davis was generally positive, but on some counts cautious. For example, he was especially positive of the enthusiasm and work put in by the parents and teachers and the resulting success in the development of a community-school concept. However, in spite of the fact that teachers in areas such as science and math were able to break the traditional subject matter approach, the attempt to integrate a general core curriculum was only moderately successful. Davis was particularly disappointed in the ability of students, teachers, and parents to develop an innovative form of student evaluation. A number of alternatives were tried, none with acceptable results. It is the contention of Davis, however, that inroads were made in breaking down the compulsive grade consciousness that had historically plagued the mind of the community. On another front, Fairview was very successful in developing an educational materials center, with current periodicals, newspapers, and textbooks available to individuals working on projects. The investigation

and ordering of these materials were in many cases the labor of students.³³

A review of these successes and failures leads one to interpret the Fairview program as significantly affected by the progressive spirit. Certainly, the quality of the bulletin written by the faculty suggests that those same teachers would most likely demonstrate aggressiveness in putting such theory into practice. Couple this with the evaluation of the program put forth by Davis, and it is not without evidence to say that Fairview was well on its way, in the late 1930's and early 1940's, to becoming a model progressive school.

And so, Cold Springs and Fairview represent two distinct strains in the progressive education movement in Alabama. In one case, a relatively isolated group responded to the difficulties of a situation. In the other case, a dedicated faculty worked in conjunction with a state-wide effort to realize the goals of progressive education. Though the techniques were different, the attitude, commitment, spirit, and ideological leanings were the same. Two case studies obviously cannot encompass the diversity of interests and contributions integral to the statewide movement, but the commonalities noted between two schools are what best characterize the type of progressivism which was infused across Alabama.

The collapse of the movement to make Alabama's schools progressive parallels to an extraordinary degree the demise of the national progressive education movement. The first and the most crippling factor was World War II. The War forced an immediate drain on the human resource as teachers were called into the military and defense related jobs. Most severely hit were the young people, many recently graduated from the very laboratory schools which had prepared them as liberal agents for the tradition-bound schools. One principal recalled that he lost over 40 per cent of his high school faculty in the first two years of the War. These were all young people whom he considered central in the efforts to continue instructional innovation in his school. Many were young men going to the military and some were men and women going to war-related

³³Taken from a tape of the author's interview with Dr. W. L. Davis in Auburn, Alabama, April, 1973.

industries or returning home to help their families.³⁴ Such a circumstance was indicative of what was happening across the State as faculty turnover resulted increasingly in higher proportions of unqualified personnel providing the stop-gap measure for manning the classrooms. In such a situation a return to the security of a narrow subject matter curriculum was imminent.

A more bizarre but extremely effective factor in the breakdown of the movement was the tire and gas rationing during the War years. As has already been demonstrated, the success of the statewide program was dependent on the involvement of masses of teachers and administrators. With each Peabody workshop and each summer curriculum study group at state colleges having about thirty different schools represented in their sessions, the influence for progressivism was widely diffused. Also, the fact that local school groups were asked to develop their own programs and report progress and expenditures to the State Director of the Division of Instruction added further pressure for massive in-service participation. In this latter case, one obvious mode of demonstrating interest to the State Department was to organize and report attendance at in-service and locally developed faculty meetings. Weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings became common across the State. They were usually held on a week night or on Saturday morning. Often, several schools or systems would combine efforts and gather at a convenient place on a regular basis for study and planning.

These locally developed faculty meetings were, in many cases, exciting and profitable sessions. Representatives of such meetings report that often an *esprit de corps* was developed and the sharing of ideas was catalytic to a more exciting return to the classroom. The reporting of ideas that worked and ideas that failed by people of common circumstance and status was useful to teachers and administrators as they sought to develop quality programs. More importantly, the meetings provided a forum where people could express their convictions and receive the gratification that comes with having others listen and care. Tire and gas rationing restrained travel and thereby cut deeply into this inservice program, and a return to the isolationism so

³⁴*Ibid.*

typical of public school faculties was an effective factor in slowing the progressive momentum.

The general oppressiveness that comes with a war conscious nation, the drain on human resources, and the rather mundane material problems caused by the War effort affected negatively the national progressive education movement generally and the Alabama movement specifically. What continued as progressive innovation during the War years was quite moderate and even these were essentially stopped in the early 50's, as Alabama along with the rest of America, experienced a sweeping conservative reactionism.

W. J. Terry rode the crest of the conservative swing and campaigned for the state superintendency on the promise to return the schools to quality education of former times when education meant the development of the intellect through the subject matter disciplines. Though he avoided the typical polemics against progressive education, his message was clear and his campaign successful. He became Alabama's State Superintendent of Education in 1951.

With the new administration, shifting of personnel all but wiped out from key positions those who had been influential in the progressive movement. Nowhere is this shift of responsibility more evident than in the choice of personnel for the State Court of Study Committee. Most of the seventeen members and consultants who served to write the *Course of Study* published in 1950 have names which are familiar to those who have investigated or were involved in the progressive movement of the 1930's and 1940's in Alabama. Not one of those seventeen names appears on the register of the 1954 *Course of Study*. To note the difference in the philosophies expressed in those two reports is to note the importance of this switch in personnel.

Illustrative of this change in educational philosophy, the 1950 *Course of Study* gives thirty-three pages to explaining the core curriculum, along with a presentation of suggested activities, studies, and organization for a successful core program in the secondary schools.⁸⁵ The *Course of Study* devotes three

⁸⁵*Course of Study and Guide for Teachers, Grades 1-12* (Alabama State Board of Education, Montgomery, 1950), 280-313.

pages to explaining what the "advocates" of the core curriculum claim as their concern.³⁶ This explanation is prefaced by the rather negatively emotive sentence that "the phrase 'core curriculum' is used in so many ways that it is impossible to know what the user means by it until the actual practices in his school are examined."³⁷

Revealing also are the ways in which the subject matter content considerations are developed. The suggestions for third and fourth grade mathematics is quite indicative. The 1950 bulletin deals in a very general way with suggested problems that accommodate a certain level of development, using real life activities as the spring board for skill acquisition. The emphasis is on utilizing the experiences of children, flexibility of individual and group work, and basing learning activities on individual needs and abilities.³⁸ The 1954 bulletin begins with a discussion of fundamental cognitive processes and the use of teacher-made and standardized tests in evaluative procedures. This is followed by specific recommendations of content dealing with arithmetical vocabulary, common measures, Roman numerals, column addition, and multiplication and division facts. Illustrative of the rigidity of this document is that it even stipulates the number of placed minuends and subtrahends third and fourth graders should be able to cope with in problems of subtraction.³⁹

The two *Course of Study* bulletins are internally consistent in their philosophic stance and marked in their opposition to each other. The first is progressive, the second is traditional. The final collapse of the progressive movement in Alabama can be dated with the 1951 election of a new State Superintendent of Education, and the publication of his first *Course of Study* in 1954 is no more than the overt affirmation of the return to the traditional subject-centered curriculum.

It would, of course, be unfair to lay the blame of the collapse ultimately on the administration of Superintendent W. J. Terry. The presence of his philosophy in that office was no more than

³⁶*Course of Study, Grades 1-12* (Alabama State Board of Education, Montgomery, 1954), 523-526.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 523.

³⁸*Course of Study and Guide for Teachers, Grades 1-12*, 353.

³⁹*Course of Study, Grades 1-12*, 181-186.

a reflection of the beliefs and attitudes of the State at large. On the national scene, the death of the journal "Progressive Education" and the termination of the Progressive Education Association occurred in the 1950's. To those involved in the progressive movement in Alabama, it was a bitter realization that their State would not be spared.

"SERAPHENA SPEAKS (WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT)"

by

William Warren Rogers

The woman signed her letter "Seraphena," no last name was given. But her communication, written June 29, 1869, to Ryland Randolph, fiery editor of the Tuscaloosa *Independent Monitor*, both shocked and delighted her fellow Alabamians. Southern women rarely addressed themselves to newspapers on any subject, and it was unheard of for a woman to call an editor to task. Particularly if the editor happened to be Ryland Randolph, surely the state's most unreconstructed citizen.

The thirty-three-year-old journalist and Confederate veteran had earned a reputation: he led the local Ku Klux Klan, passed his time terrorizing the entire faculty of the University of Alabama (he dismissed them as worthless carpetbaggers and scalawags), and frequently followed up his editorial battles with physical encounters including fists, knives, and guns. Among other things, Randolph's *Independent Monitor*, whose motto "White Man — Right Or Wrong — Still The White Man!" correctly indicated its contents, had been briefly suppressed for making disloyal statements.¹

¹The colorful Ryland Randolph, 1835-1903, is long overdue for a full biography. Much can be gained from reading the columns of the Tuscaloosa *Independent Monitor* (and his later newspapers, the Tuscaloosa *Blade* and the Birmingham *Alabama True Issue*). Also of major importance are his "Autobiographical Episodes" in the John Witherspoon DuBose papers and the Randolph Collection of Newspaper Clippings, both on file at the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery. Housed in Special Collections at Samford University, Birmingham, are three essential collections of Randolph material. Persons interested in Randolph should also consult Gladys Ward, "Life of Ryland Randolph," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1932; Robert K. Bell, "Reconstruction in Tuscaloosa County," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1933; and Nancy Anne Sindon, "The Career of Ryland Randolph: A Study in Reconstruction Journalism," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Florida State University, 1965. Sarah Van Wiggins of the History Department at the University of Alabama has written two excellent articles on Randolph: "The Political Cartoons of the Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor and Tuscaloosa Blade, 1867-1873," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (1965), 140-65; and "The Life of Ryland Randolph As Seen Through His Letters to John W. DuBose," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXX (1968), 145-80.

The young bachelor (he later married and had two sons) thought nothing of issuing diatribes against women when their actions displeased him. What he considered their self-indulgence, imagined illnesses, and over eating prompted one such critical column. Angered by Randolph's bullying, Seraphena drafted a reply. A more incongruous setting would be difficult to imagine: a woman speaking her mind in the deep South state of Alabama during the turbulent era of Reconstruction. Yet Seraphena's letter was so clever, engaging, and well written that a non-plused Randolph printed it. For perhaps the only time in his career, he had no retort to make. As Seraphena put it,

"MR. EDITOR:

In behalf of my persecuted sex (of course I'm a woman) I wish to enter a protest against some of the sarcasms and criticisms in your paper of a fortnight ago. So long as you '*rap the men over the knuckles*,' very well; but in one of your last editorials — to which your printer called particular attention by prefixing a hand and forefinger (*a man's hand, at that!*) pointing to your strictures — you indulge in some very erroneous remarks on the causes of ill-health in women. Pray, sir, have you a very large experience in feeding, rearing, physic-ing, and exercising women? How many have you in family, sir; and what is the age of your eldest daughter? Is her hair red, and all her own? Does she rise early and work for an appetite? And is she subsisted on very nutritious diet? Not being personally acquainted with you, I may be mistaken in supposing that you must have a large family of idle, voracious daughters, and very few sons-in-law; for it sometimes happens that those who have the smallest experience, imagine that they can give the best advice. Miss Edgeworth — a venerable *maiden* of seventy — for instance, once wrote a book of instruction to *mothers*, on the 'best mode of bringing up children.' [Seraphena was referring to Maria Edgeworth, 1767-1849, an English-born writer of charming but didactic Irish tales for children]. Well, sir, if you have a large family of unmarried daughters, from whose habits you have drawn your observations, or if you are in a still worse condition, as an *editorial bachelor*, who has grown cross at the whole sex because a few dozen of us have declined your offers — in either case, I wish to inform you that

you are under serious mistakes as to the habits of *some of us*, at least.

For instance, here is myself (by the way, I wish you could see my picture — a *chef d'oeuvre* of Voyle. It would tell you — but I say nothing). Well, as I was saying, here is myself; I rise every morning before — but in the first place I always go to bed the *night before*, just after tea — Ma's teas, I should tell you, are always light; consisting merely of coffee, biscuit, waffles, ham, cold chicken, cheese, &c., with a little cake, preserves, and pickle — of all which I nibble a little, just to keep me from knowing that I have no appetite. After a slight repast of this kind, I retire — not being annoyed with the calls of your horrid sex — and sleep like an angel.

To prove that I don't 'over-eat,' (as you say in your saucy editorial) I have only to remark that I never groan in my sleep, or *snore*. Do you ask how I know? Well — *I* say it; and pray who knows better than I do? Well, I rise next morning, *before breakfast*, and take a deal of exercise before going to the table. For instance, I have my clothes to find (they *will*, somehow get out of place), and generally I have to devote a half hour of scolding to our stupid maid, to teach her order and industry, and frequently have to slap my small brother, Jake, for his remarks on my appearance. (Jakey is very impertinent sometimes.) Now, sir, don't your very ink blush when you write that 'women don't take exercise enough before breakfast to give them color or appetite?' Sir, if you could see my color, when I am advising our housemaid, or see me at breakfast, you would retract your hasty speech.

But with all of this *drudgery* (which is not without its pleasures, however — particularly that relating to the housemaid and Jakey), so stimulating to the appetite, I restrain myself, knowing that it is unhealthy to *breakfast heartily*. For instance, I merely take a little coffee, with a hot muffin or two, a small piece of steak, with a little fish, a few fried potatoes, with perhaps, an egg or two — finishing lightly on a few cakes with syrup, and a glass of milk. You see, sir, that your wholesale remark, about women 'over-eating,' &c., is to general.

But, to resume. After breakfast, and while Ma is 'washing up the things,' I devote some time to conversation with her, as

a dutiful daughter should. When Pa is present, I generally talk with him, relative to *what I need*, knowing that it will save him a deal of trouble to tell him, rather than leave him to guess what it is. As to being always dressed and on the '*qui vive* for visitors,' you are out again, if you mean by 'visitors' your tiresome sex. I never *waste time on them*; and they know it so well that they are wise enough to let me alone. As to 'nibbling such trash between meals as is found in safes,' let me inform you, sir, that I never take lunch between meals. I only eat a little cake, with, perhaps, some pickle, at intervals — my time being mostly occupied either in talking to darling Fanny on subjects too elevated for the gross apprehension of you men, or in reading the solid literature of the day, found in those charming publications with yellow covers.

Dinner, sir, is my only *serious meal*, and I am not so angelic as to refrain from compensating myself for my self-denial at breakfast and supper. You err again, sir, when you say that we 'sleep heavily in the afternoon, often protracting the siesta into the shades of night.' Too sweeping, sir. For one, I always sleep lightly, and never fail to awake at once when the *tea* bell rings.

Now, sir, I have given you a *specimen of one day*, and I wish to ask if you do not think that a public journalist (whose aim it should be to teach the world wholesome sentiments of admiration for the female sex,) ought to have a *co-editress*, whose magical eye will admonish him when he is tempted to say that 'women over-eat, oversleep, are indolent, overlaced, over-aged or overlooked.' In short, sir, that you should have a Xanthippe tied to your right elbow, to guide your pen into more deferential language towards that indispensable sex, which *sings for you men, dances with you, dresses for you, sighs for you, and does four-fifths of all the flirting for you!*

Hoping, sir, that you will have the grace to make the *amende* in a handsome paragraph, and that your printer will prefix a *woman's hand* pointing to this letter, I am

Yours, respectfully,

SERAPHENA."

HELEN KELLER'S FIRST PUBLIC SPEECH

by

Carol Cotton

Miss Helen Keller has become so much a national institution like Niagara Falls, the Bunker Hill Monuments and the memory of George Washington that one hesitates to proclaim any discovery concerning her, for fear it has been made already by some one else.¹

Helen Keller is a well-studied national figure, but there are aspects of her life that, although they have been discovered, are not common knowledge. The story of Helen's experience at the pump is well known. Most people know that she eventually learned to talk. Many know she lectured across the United States. Some know she starred in a movie² and few know she was a vaudeville performer.³ But one aspect of her life that seems essentially unknown is that Helen Keller was a Socialist.

In 1909, Helen joined the Socialist Party in Massachusetts, a fact not made public until early 1912.⁴ The newspapers caught word of her affiliation and began to spread rumors that the Socialists were using a poor blind, deaf girl for the advancement of their cause. Answering these charges, Helen wrote an editorial for the *New York Call*, November 3, 1912. Replying to her own question, "How did I become a Socialist?" she wrote, "By reading. The first book I read was Well's *New Worlds for Old*."⁵ Anne Sullivan recommended she read the work because it was a well written piece of literature. Later John Macy, Anne's husband, selected some of the Socialist literature from his personal library for Helen to read. "I do not find him inclined to instruct me about socialism; indeed I have

¹Lecture program, "The Heart and the Hand," February 6, 1913, (program notes by Joseph B. Gilder), Helen Keller file, Alabama Department of Archives and History. (Hereafter cited as Lecture program).

²Keller, Helen. *Midstream: My Later Life* (Garden City, New York, 1937), 156. (Hereafter cited as *Midstream*).

³*Ibid.*, 214.

⁴Foner, Philip S. *Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years*, (New York, 1967), 12.

⁵Keller, Helen. "How I Became a Socialist," in *Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years*,

often complained to him that he did not talk to me about it as much as I should like."⁶

In her book, *Midstream*, Helen Keller explains in detail her views and gives insight to the motivation for her numerous articles and lectures given for the Socialist Party.

I have already said that people are not interested in what I think of things outside myself, but there are certain subjects about which I feel very deeply. When I look out upon the world, I see society divided into two great elements, and organized around an industrial life which is selfish, combative, and acquisitive, with the result that man's better instincts are threatened, while his evil propensities are intensified and protected . . . my love for America is not blind. Perhaps I am more conscious of her faults because I love her so deeply?⁷

Helen mastered the silent language of writing and lip reading and wrote numerous articles for the woman's suffrage movement and for worker's rights; but she recognized her need for speech and later expressed it saying, "Without a language of some sort one is not a human being; without speech one is not a complete human being. Even when the speech is not beautiful there is a fountain of joy in uttering words."⁸

In 1890, at age ten, Helen began articulation lessons from Miss Sarah Fuller the principal of the Horace Mann school for the deaf. After studying four years with Miss Fuller, Helen entered Wright-Humason Oral School in New York for lessons in speech and lip reading. Anne Sullivan worked patiently with Helen trying to develop her speech, but it was Charles A. White who accomplished the most with Helen's speech. White, a well known teacher of singing at the Boston Conservatory of Music, began in 1910 to give Helen singing and speaking lessons. Helen later wrote of the success of their work, "It was three years before we felt I might try a public appearance."⁹

Philip S. Foner, ed., (New York, 1967), 22.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Keller, *Midstream*, 329-332.

⁸*Ibid.*, 90.

⁹*Ibid.*, 96.

It was arranged then for them to give a demonstration of their success.

Helen noted that her first public speaking appearance was February 6, 1913, in Montclair, New Jersey.¹⁰ The *New York Times* reported the occasion. "The famous blind and deaf girl made her debut as a public speaker in Montclair tonight at the Hillside School."¹¹ The lecture, "The Heart and the Hand: the Right Use of Our Senses,"¹² was "under the auspice of the Montclair branch of the Socialist Party."¹³

Helen described the audience of her first lecture remembering that "everyone was kind and sympathetic."¹⁴ A writer for the *New York Times* reported that her audience numbered nearly one thousand.¹⁵ A printed program gave the details of the evenings lecture.

Mrs. Macy will speak first telling how she came to teach Helen Keller . . . Helen is introduced, and, by her teacher's side, she delivers her message. At its close, she answers the questions of her audience, transmitted to her by her teacher. Being able to give thoughts of her active brain, Helen Keller brings a message that is full of a sunshine which she in her blindness sees more fully than those who have sight.¹⁶

The performance was as indicated in the program. "Mrs. Macy gave the history of the blind girl and described the methods whereby she had acquired an education and the power to speak."¹⁷ The program very clearly states, "It is a message addressed to those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not."¹⁸ These words are much like words found in the text of the speech: "You have your eyes, and you behold the sun, and yet you are more blind than I."¹⁹

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

¹²Lecture program.

¹³*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

¹⁴Keller, *Midstream*, 97.

¹⁵*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

¹⁶Lecture program.

¹⁷*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

¹⁸Lecture program.

¹⁹*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

Helen remembered that in her first lecture, she forgot all of Mr. White's rules, "and felt my voice soaring and I knew that meant falsetto; frantically I dragged it down until my words fell about me like loose bricks." She went off the stage in tears, "Oh, it is too difficult, too difficult, I cannot do the impossible."²⁰ The following day's *New York Times* provided a different interpretation of the event, "Those in the rear of the hall heard Miss Keller with difficulty at times owing to her lack of emphasis but she made a strong impression."²¹ Her voice must have sounded much like that in the account in the *New York Times*, March 31, 1913. "The quality is indescribable. The intonation is much more varied than had been expected. . . . She speaks slowly, enunciating each vowel and consonant combination separately, with the tone low pitched as if they came from within the throat."²²

The speech was brief, only 21 sentences, 308 words. Helen organized the speech into an introduction, body and conclusion. In her opening statement, she specifically declared her purpose; "I am going to try to make you feel that no one of us can do anything alone, that we are bound together." In the sentences which follow, she stated her desire for a change. "I do not like the world as it is. I am trying to make it a little more as I would like to have it." However, she never identified the desired change. Perhaps because her appearance was prefaced by Mrs. Macy's story of Helen's life, Helen's first 107 words related Mrs. Macy's introduction to her own speech topic. "It was the hands of others that made this miracle in me. Without my teacher I should be nothing. . . . We live by and for each other." She then moved to the body of the speech, 145 words, which contains many of her socialistic views. "The land, the life, the machinery belong to a few. . . . If workers were adequately paid there would be no rich people . . . It is the labor of the poor that makes us comfortable."

The conclusion contains 48 words. The final statement relates to her first. "It is a good world and it will be much better when you help me make it more as I want it." The final

²⁰Keller, *Midstream*, 97.

²¹*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

²²*New York Times*, February 31, 1913.

²³*New York Times*, February 7, 1913.

reference to the opening words of the address, gives the speech a needed unity.

The speech itself was perceived as Socialistic. The *New York Times* report the following day began, "The famous blind and deaf girl . . . Miss Keller . . . is a Socialist and she expressed radical political views."

The Montclair, New Jersey lecture was the first of many public speeches for Helen Keller. Later she dedicated her life to work for the blind, but it was her dedication to Socialism that inspired Helen Keller, "national institute," to develop her speaking ability. The little known fact that Helen Keller was a Socialist, had an unrecognized impact on her life.

BOOK REVIEW

British Drums on the Southern Frontier by Larry E. Ivers. (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974, Pp. [xiii], 274. \$12.50).

"I was there" is the experience of the reader who follows the detailed account of "British Drums on the Southern Frontier." Ivers, a retired military man himself, displays an intense understanding of the soldier in Colonial America. Through extensive research he develops from records a human picture of the often rowdy, more often poorly trained, soldier of the early 18th century.

This volume has added interest as Americans move toward the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. It depicts weak southern defenses of a colony established as a buffer to protect British Carolina. It elaborates the role of the Indian in an early period of conflict with Spain and France and it adds to a fuller understanding of the character of James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of the Georgia colony.

Historians may search for newer interpretations of colonial military strategy and become impatient with Ivers' penchant for detail. However, most readers will experience the raw life of the Ranger and sense the problems that beset military leaders along the unprotected southern frontier. Major Ivers, as a Vietnam Army ranger veteran, feels a kinship with the Georgia ranger. It is this understanding that pulls the documentary web together, capturing a personal phase of colonial history that has never been depicted with such close examination.

The line drawings of Bill Drath give an added dimension to this book as they illustrate the uniform of the Regiment of Foot, Scout, Ranger, Marine, Highlander and Indian Warrior. Ivers' maps also contribute to the graphic presentation of this frontier military history.

Thirty-six pages of footnotes and a detailed index further strengthen the book as a useful reference volume.

Carroll Hart
Georgia Department of
Archives and History

Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900. Compiled and edited by Lucille Griffith. (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1972. IX, 677 pp. \$15.00.)

The present volume is a revised and enlarged edition of the author's *History of Alabama, 1540-1900: As Recorded in Dairies, Letters, and Papers of the Times* (Northport, Alabama, 1962). In the preface to the new volume the author states "that less than half of this volume was in the earlier one." Both volumes were "based on the theory that the most interesting history is that told by the people who lived it."

The new volume includes the controversial legend of Madoc, a Welsh prince who purportedly landed on the Gulf Coast, possibly Mobile Bay, in 1170 — some three hundred years before Columbus set foot on the western hemisphere. The book treats in documentary form with interesting commentary, Alabama's Colonial period; territorial history; the Indians and Indian wars; economic development, agriculture, slavery, commerce, industry, transportation, the church and the school in Antebellum Alabama; the way people lived before the Civil War; the War; Reconstruction; politics from 1874 to 1900; and social life, education, and economic developments after the war.

In the preface the author states: "I have let all kinds of people, young and old, men, women and children, black and white, slave and free, educated and uneducated, governors and tenant farmer, from every section of the state have a part in this book." The results is an unusual and fascinating history as told by the people who were there. Although the author did well what she planned, it is a pity that so many histories of Alabama end with 1900. The years since that date will soon be as long as statehood before that time (1819-1900).

Malcolm C. McMillan
Auburn University

Blacks in Bondage: Letters of American Slaves. Robert S. Starobin (editor). (New York: New Viewpoints. 1974. pp. xviii, 196. \$3.95 paper.)

The recent trend in American slavery historiography has

been away from the emphasis on research into the records of planters and other representatives of the white master class and toward an investigation of the accounts of the slaves themselves. The heavy reliance on diaries written by whites and travelers' reports in the past resulted in a biased, one-sided view of the institution and of its victims and tended to regard the blacks as merely acted upon rather than acting in their own behalf. The surge in black studies and the appearance on the historiographical scene of significant numbers of black historians during the past decade has also played an important part in the changing emphasis of slavery studies.

The late Robert S. Starobin attempted in this collection to bring together historical evidence produced by slaves and free Negroes in the ante bellum period in an effort to illuminate the daily lives of these folk and to try the almost impossible task of revealing their personal feelings and attitudes. His search through Southern and Northern archives brought to the surface a number of fascinating letters written by slave overseers to their absentee masters in which it is quite evident that these blacks assumed a tremendous amount of responsibility over the operation of plantations as well as acting as personnel managers of the resident slave population. The letters are not often revelatory of the innermost thoughts of the slaves but in many sections do illustrate the close family ties existing between slaves and the existence of a stable and meaningful family life.

Starobin's desire to examine history "from the bottom up" produced letters and documents from house servants in which the authors of the materials correspond with their masters with a good deal of familiarity including repeated vows of fidelity and loyalty which, the editor stresses, might indicate the slaves' true feelings or might on the other hand be examples of the "put on" manner most congenial to the bonded servants' well-being. The numerous slave artisans in Southern cities and towns before the Civil War produced a number of documents included in the collection providing light on the contractual arrangements between "hired out" slave and master and in one revealing letter the problems arising from a slave husband alone in the city with his wife remaining on the plantation.

The second and third sections of Starobin's book contain petitions from slaves desiring freedom, often bitterly protesting

the repudiation of their owners' wills by the latter's heirs and petitioning legislatures and legal authorities for redress. The editor devotes a considerable amount of space to evidences of slave rebellion, especially in documents relating to the abortive Gabriel's revolt in Virginia in 1800. The court testimony and other evidence included presents a graphic picture of conspiracy of wide ramifications almost achieving success in its implementation. Letters are also presented dealing with the flight of slaves to Canada; the efforts of blacks to emigrate to Liberia and a few letters home from that African state.

Each section of the collection is prefaced by an essay by the editor placing the materials in their historical context and further explanatory notes preface the individual documents or series of documents. The collection is a worthwhile addition to the burgeoning amount of slavery source material available, although the paperback price is excessive considering the relatively small amount of text and documents included.

Norman Lederer
Menard Junior College

Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida In the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877. By Jerrell H. Shofner. (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1974, \$12.50).

It has been over sixty years since any scholar has written a serious study of Florida during Reconstruction. Until the publication of *Nor Is It Over Yet* by Jerrell H. Shofner, William Watson Davis's monumental *Florida During Civil War and Reconstruction* (1913) has been the standard work on the period. Professor Shofner, who is chairman of the Department of History at Florida Technological University, has done a great service to Southern history in general and Florida history in particular by publishing this splendid new work. Using the vast new sources that have been accumulating for decades in such places as the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Florida State Library, and the P. K. Yonge Collection of Florida History in Gainesville, Shofner begins his book with the implementation of Lincoln's reconstruction plan in 1863 and ends it with the restoration of "home rule" in 1877. It is not sur-

prising that Shofner should come up with a quite different interpretation than that of Davis and the traditionalists.

Contrary to what Shofner calls "long-standing myths," white Floridians were never helpless under a corrupt reconstruction government imposed on them by outsiders and supported by illiterate blacks and Federal troops. Democrats, he maintains, "were in a strong minority position in all branches and at all levels of government from the beginning of Republican administration in 1868." These Democrats bargained with considerable success with the two Republican administrations:

Whether they were scheming behind closed doors with moderate Republicans to thwart the Radicals and establish a white government during the constitutional convention, resisting unfavorable legislation by dilatory tactics in the legislature, joining an alienated Republican group to impeach the governor, or terrorizing Negro voters in the north-central counties . . . , they were a limiting factor on Republican policy-makers.

The author believes that the Democrats of the 1870's and later might well have been grateful to Governor Harrison Reed and the Republicans who were in power during this difficult transitional period. "Any leadership would have had trouble rebuilding a depressed economy and maintaining order during such attempted social transforation. The Democrats were able to participate actively in the process, reap the long-term benefits of Republican measures, and then blame the opposition party for all that was wrong." This, according to Shofner, provided the Democrats with campaign material for years to come.

Professor Shofner's book is not merely a political history. He writes with compassion and understanding about the financial and social plight of the newly-freed Negroes, and touches on religion, education, immigration, and economic development. His sketches of the leading figures of the period are lucid and penetrating and his assessment of the much maligned Governor Reed is refreshingly fair. The author believes, despite their short comings, that the idealist and opportunist of the new regime fought to democratize the state, and that much good came out of the struggle. But unlike the late Professor Davis,

he bestows less praise and less blame on both sides. The scholarship, style, and balance of *Nor Is It Over Yet* will make it stand as the definitive work on Florida during Reconstruction for years to come.

Joseph D. Cushman
University of the South

Gulf Coast Politics in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Ted Carageorge and Thomas J. Gilliam (Pensacola: Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, 1973, pp. 89).

This brief volume contains the proceedings of the fourth annual Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference held in Pensacola in November, 1972. The six papers plus two commentaries cover a wide range of subjects. Melvin E. Bradford of the University of Dallas offers a combative defense of the thought of the Vanderbilt agrarians while Paul M. Gaston of the University of Virginia writes elegantly and critically of the apostles of the New South Creed of the late nineteenth century and of their modern counterparts. Gaston concludes that the New South Creed is one experience the South need not cultivate or perpetrate. "It was sham and ruse to begin with and its perpetration today . . . can only spoil our dreams, give us sorrow and disappointment."

William F. Holmes of the University of Georgia writes of the movement for disfranchisement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Holmes concludes that disfranchisement was not the result of a combination of catalytic events and forces that followed in the wake of the collapse of the Populist revolt but rather that disfranchisement had been a constant aim of most Southern whites since Reconstruction. Effective disfranchisement often occurred, he points out, prior to the adoption of the new State constitutions of the 1890's and early 1900's. David M. Chalmers of the University of Florida continues the emphasis upon race relations in a paper that traces the role of racial violence in the politics of the deep South in the twentieth century.

In the only essay which focuses specifically upon a Gulf Coast city or region, Melton A. McLaurin of the University of

South Alabama writes of the effect of World War II upon race relations in Mobile. Drawing upon hitherto unavailable primary sources, McLaurin focuses upon the creative role of John LeFlore, a long-time civil rights leader in Mobile, and of Joseph N. Langan, a civic and political leader of Mobile for the past three decades.

In the longest essay in this collection, William C. Havard of Virginia Polytechnic Institute reviews the political developments of the past twenty-five years in the Gulf Coast states. Drawing upon his work as editor of and contributor to *The Changing Politics of the South* (1972), a recent attempt to update V. O. Key's classic work on Southern politics, Havard sketches the political developments since 1948 in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

There are two commentaries on Havard's paper. The first, by former-Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi, is rambling and discursive and borders upon self-caricature. The second, by C. G. Gomillion of Tuskegee Institute, is a simple but powerful statement of one man's belief in human kind. The volume also contains eight pages of illustrations of memorabilia from nineteenth century presidential campaigns, which were used to highlight a presentation by Herbert R. Collins, assistant curator in the political division of the Smithsonian Institute.

A review of any collection of papers by different authors is always difficult, especially when there is little in point of view or in approach or theme which the papers have in common. Taken as a whole, these essays do raise certain questions, however. As indicated above, only one essay deals specifically with the Gulf Coast region. The others deal with broader themes in Southern history with a focus of varying intensity upon those states which border the Gulf but with little or no specific attention to the impact of the Gulf Coast section of those states.

It may be that to continue the high quality of this series of conferences, historians of broader scope had to be sought. It may be that historians are a hidebound lot and have yet to break the habit of viewing all political developments through the prism of state boundaries and thus fail to see the unity, the common cultural and political development, of a trans-state

region like the Gulf Coast. Or it just may be that, more than we realize, state lines are still a primary defining characteristic in our political life.

Within the states, there may be great diversity, but it is diversity that occurs within a circumscribed system that has evolved in its own unique fashion. It is clear, for example, that southwestern Alabama bears a great resemblance to north-west Florida. But the two Gulf Coast regions have played quite different roles in the politics of these two states. Nor is it clear that the coastal regions of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas share a great deal in common either culturally or politically.

Despite these reservations, however, the sponsors of the Gulf Coast Humanities Conference are to be congratulated. These papers continue the high standards established by the three previous conferences.

William D. Barnard
Alabama Commission on
Higher Education